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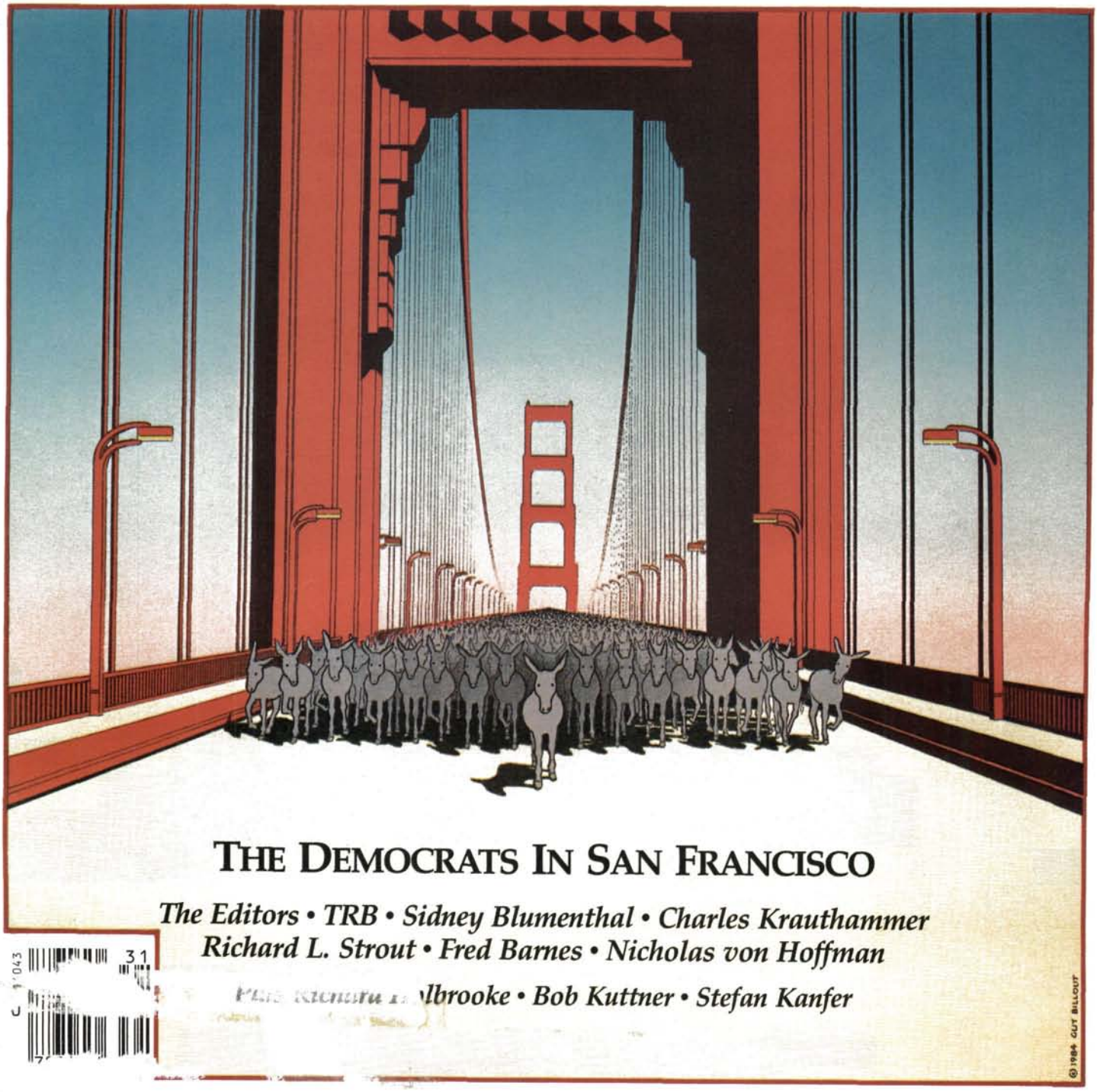

THE DEMOCRATS IN SAN FRANCISCO

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CORRESPONDENCE

THE MARINES CAN FIGHT

To the editors:

I started to read Arthur T. Hadley's "America's Broken War Machine" (TNR, May 7), and after completing the first page, I was deeply impressed by Mr. Hadley's use of misinformation and innuendo. I have no idea who Mr. Hadley's sources about the Iranian rescue mission were, but I will cite mine and can unequivocally state that Mr. Hadley did not speak to them.

The planning to rescue the hostages started right after the hostages were taken, well before January 1980, as Mr. Hadley has it. The first set of Navy pilots were selected to join the already selected Marine pilots for several reasons, none of which (contrary to Mr. Hadley) had to do with taking off from Navy ships. Over the years, we have qualified pilots from all services aboard carriers and continue to do so. The real issue, the initial Navy commander told me, was that Navy helicopters were selected for their superior endurance and load-carrying capability.

The Navy squadron commander chose some of his best mission commanders to accompany him to the "en route training" while the other pilots and aircraft joined the carrier in the Indian Ocean. The Navy commander said that in retrospect had he known what the mission was, he would have selected only a few different pilots. No Navy pilot quit when told of the mission.

Mr. Hadley says the Marines were then "elected to supply the volunteers, because the Marines were the only branch of the armed forces still without a role in this prestigious undertaking." But a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the time of the pilot selection tells me that all services were given a chance to supply pilots. Marine, Navy, and Air Force pilots, having been found the best qualified during the training period, finally flew on the raid. The Marine pilots, Mr. Hadley claims, "had not been trained for any missions requiring such complex flying skills." But the skills involved, flying from a ship, navigating at night, using night vision goggles, and flying on instruments, were exactly the skills that all Marine helicopter pilots possessed. All of the Marine pilots were handpicked; the majority were veterans of at least one combat tour in Vietnam.

Contrary to Mr. Hadley's asserting that "discipline was lax," that "the Marine pilots did a great deal of drinking and blew some dope," and that "several Marines told some of the girls down at the local bars about the rescue mission," the Marine commander and a member of the J.C.S. both stated that they were never told of a single security breach. Moreover, I have never heard of a Marine aviation unit where discipline was lax, nor have I ever heard of a Marine pilot "blowing dope."

Mr. Hadley says that "when a second pilot saw an operational warning light flash on his instrument panel, he ditched his craft, not knowing what his Air Force counterparts had long known: that the machine could have been safely flown for at least another fifteen hours." The warning light indicated possible structural failure in the helicopter main rotor blade. A chart, prepared by the Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation, does indeed indicate that a flight of up to fifteen hours *might* not cause the blade to break. But that flight must be performed under severe restrictions. The helicopters in the Iran rescue attempt were seriously overloaded (50,000 lbs. instead of their normal maximum gross weight of 42,000 lbs.) and had to be flown at almost top speed for ten more hours to accomplish the mission. It had been decided beforehand that a main rotor blade crack would remove that aircraft from the mission.

In sum, I have taken issue with every substantive assertion that Mr. Hadley has made concerning the helicopter portion of the Iranian rescue attempt. I have spoken with the men who were there, the men from whom Mr. Hadley could have gotten the true story.

J. L. MCMANAWAY
U.S. Marine Corps
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Hadley replies:

Even the official Halloway Report on the rescue mission faults the pilot selection and organization. We are back in the "Vietnam Syndrome" of denying we have military problems rather than trying to solve them.

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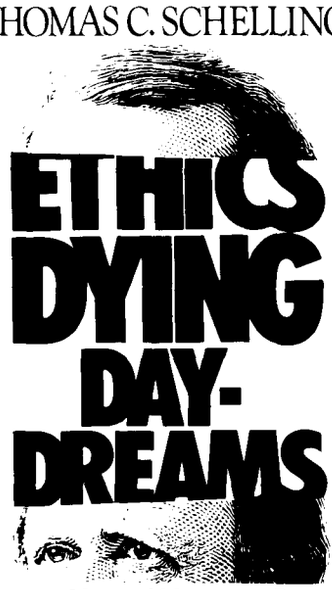

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FROM WASHINGTON

GOT A MATCH?

My favorite line in the 1984 Democratic platform declares, "We know more about the number of matches sold than about the number of children across the country who die in fires while alone at home." The indignant tone suggests this is a bad thing, but the matter is not pursued. The moving finger points, and having pointed, moves on to motor vehicle crashes ("the leading cause of death and serious injury among children between the ages of 6 months and 5 years") and teenage suicide ("We support the creation of a national panel. . .").

Much of what Democrats find endearing and exasperating about their party is in this sentence. You can just see it bubbling up from some earnest social welfare academic at Hunter College, through a Washington lobbying group, and straight into the platform because it's on someone's agenda, and no one else took offense. (The Matchworkers Union must have been asleep at the switch when this one came barreling past.) Through an initial impression of sourness, the sentence shines with generosity and optimism. Republican platform writers have been debating whether to narrow their definition of who should get government help from "the truly needy" to "the very truly needy." ("Truly nutty," *The Washington Post* remarked.) But no human sorrow is alien to the Democratic Party. First we need to "know more." Knowing more will lead to a government program, and soon the problem will be solved.

And yet, if we don't even know how many children die in fires while alone at home, how do we know it's such a terrible problem? There's a characteristically Democratic inverse complacency in the assumption that knowing more is bound to reveal that a problem is even more pressing than previously supposed. Is this liberalism, or is it social hypochondria? "Oh, doctor, we need a cure. But first, we need a disease." Yes, of course, even one death of a child in a fire while alone at home is too many. But the lunatic specificity of this complaint is itself a comment on such open-ended compassion. Is the Democratic Party turning its back on children who die in fires while at home but not alone, or while alone somewhere else, or—crowning irony—neither at home nor alone?

The Democratic platform goes into more detail about children than about any other subject. This may be because, as the platform says, "Simple decency demands that we make children one of our highest national priorities." Or it may be that children are the only thing Democrats can really agree on these days. We forthrightly favor children, and we dare the Republicans to criticize us for it. On a similar note, we are the party that opposes "violent acts of bigotry, hatred, and extremism." Wanna make something of it? On most other matters, however, we are less forthright. Geraldine Ferraro, the head of the platform committee, said she wanted "themes" and "directions," rather than specifics, and that's what she got. But producing a platform full of generalities is not a simple matter of turning on the fog machine. It's a delicate exercise in writing in code.

For example, the skilled platform writer can appear to endorse a controversial position, and then use generalities to render that endorsement meaningless: "We affirm our strong commitment to Irish unity—achieved by consent and based on reconciliation of all the people of Ireland." (See also, "We favor cheap air fares—achieved by the suspension of gravity.") On the other hand, a platform can use generalities to endorse a controversial position while appearing not to: "We believe it is a sound principle of international trade for foreign automakers which enjoy substantial sales in the United States to invest here and create jobs where their markets are," which is code for the domestic content bill. A promise to "honor the principles of residency in taxation" means tax breaks for prosperous Americans living abroad. I have no idea what it means to pledge to "address all facets of our maritime industry . . . in

continued on page 49

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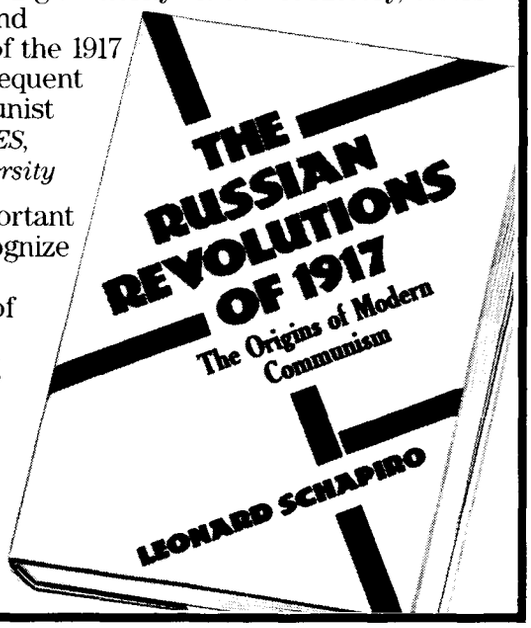

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
JULY 30, 1984

COME TO ORDER

It is a very long way back to the White House, and Walter Mondale has been moving in the wrong direction ever since he clinched the Democratic nomination on June 5. He should have immediately begun making the Democratic Party's case against President Reagan, and—more important—the case for a Democratic administration under a President Mondale. Instead, he spent his time on retrospective business. Mr. Mondale initially launched his Vice Presidential interviewing process as a demonstration of victory over his rival, Senator Gary Hart. Then the process took on a life of its own, and Mr. Mondale seemed less inspired than beset by the aspirations—among feminists, especially—he had set loose. The Vice Presidential parade could have become grand drama—a celebration of the diversity of America, of individual achievement, and of the opportunities for advancement historically created by the Democratic Party. Instead, the process devolved into a cartoonist's caricature of interest-group clamoring. When Mr. Mondale wasn't interviewing prospective running mates, he was seen ineffectually trying to figure out how to "handle" his other ex-rival, Jesse Jackson.

The way back to the White House must begin now, at the Democratic national convention in San Francisco, with a demonstration to the country of integrity, indignation, and dedication to enduring American values. Integrity is more important than unity, as Harry Truman demonstrated in 1948 when he did without both the far-left and far-right wings of the Democratic coalition (they became Progressives and Dixiecrats) and won anyway. This coming week, it may be necessary for Walter Mondale to face down a threat by Jesse Jackson to withhold full support for the Democratic ticket in November unless one or another of his demands is met. If the contingency arises, we hope that Mr. Mondale will respond with character and courage.

Mr. Mondale's most important task in San Francisco, though, is to begin enunciating in clear terms why the people of America should depose the genial, head-ducking Mr. Reagan and install Mr. Mondale in his place. Mr. Mondale needs to find a way to speak to Americans foremost in terms of their values and not merely in terms of their individual or group self-interest. He will have to talk about *families* instead of day care and child support; about *work* instead of unemployment benefits and job programs; about *opportunity* instead of corporate bailouts; about *peace* and *strength* instead of nuclear panic and conventional paralysis. Most of all he needs to talk about the *future*, and about how a Democratic future would be better for the country and its friends than a future under a second Reagan term.

Encouragingly, there is a sense of the future and of deep American values in the rhetoric of this year's Democratic Party platform, especially in its sections on domestic policy. Psychologically, the Democratic Party has moved a long way back from the dispirited days of 1979 and 1980, with its sense that history had somehow condemned the party and the nation to a future of decline and shrinkage. Instead of offering excuses for stagflation, declining productivity, and lagging standards of living, this year's

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platform speaks of economic growth, prosperity, jobs, dignity, and opportunity as the goals of the Democratic Party.

The platform is appropriately scorching toward the Reagan Administration, especially on the issues of budget deficits and unfairness. We hope that Mr. Mondale will begin in San Francisco to make the American people aware of the emptiness of Mr. Reagan's claims to have set the American economy on a long-term growth track and of his denials that his policies have hurt the poor. As the platform observes, Mr. Reagan's reductions in inflation were attained by throwing ten million workers out of work during the 1982 recession, and his election-year recovery has been produced by unprecedented deficit spending that will surely generate higher interest rates and induce a new recession, a world banking collapse, or both. Even if the worst does not happen, Mr. Reagan has loaded a burden of debt on future generations of Americans, forcing them to pay as principal and interest money they might otherwise have used to create jobs, train teachers, or manufacture lasers. The President, in effect, is robbing America's children to fuel his reelection campaign, and the voters need to understand that.

To the extent that Mr. Reagan plans to do anything about the deficits he has created, the record indicates that he will do so at the expense of those least able to endure the sacrifice. As the Congressional Budget Office has pointed out, households with incomes above $80,000 per year have enjoyed net benefit gains totaling $35 billion during the Reagan years, mainly in tax cuts, while households under $10,000 have endured net benefit losses of $23 billion. Because of Social Security tax increases, inflation, and the Administration's unprecedented failure to adjust minimum tax levels, a family of four at the poverty line has actually had its tax bill more than doubled since 1980, from $462 to $1,079. If Mr. Reagan is reelected, he almost certainly will come forward with a tax "reform" measure which helps the rich and cuts more programs for the poor; and if his economic policies produce a new recession, his past deficits will make it impossible for the government to borrow either to stimulate the economy toward recovery or even pay adequate unemployment benefits. Fairness is not an interest-group issue; it's a matter of national values.

UNFORTUNATELY, although the Democratic platform's rhetoric shows that the party now knows what Americans want in terms of broad goals, its specific proposals indicate that the party still has not developed either a new strategy or a sense of priorities. The Democrats are still inclined to promise everything to everybody, only now they call public spending "investment." The platform calls for investment in children, in education, in the arts, in job training, in the cities, in infrastructure, and in public housing. No one reading the platform will find evidence in it that the Democrats can balance the budget, guard against renewed inflation, and untangle the knots in our economic system.

If Walter Mondale is to become the Harry Truman of 1984, battling back to victory against all the odds, he will have to assume an aspect of gritty realism—of telling the public the whole truth, whether it likes it or not. He can and should say that Ronald Reagan is indulging in fantasies of "painless" growth, but he must not indulge in fantasies himself. The truth is that the deficit cannot be brought down simply by taxing the rich and scaling back increases in defense spending. The middle class will have to pay more in taxes and/or receive less in entitlement benefits. The Democrats actually would raise taxes for the middle class by "deferral" of indexing, meaning that taxpayers will be pushed into higher tax brackets by inflation. The impact, however, is not admitted in the platform, much as responsibility for the effects of bracket creep are never accepted by Congress.

As part of its "industrial strategy," the Democrats refer correctly to the history of government involvement in promoting agriculture, railroads, and space-related industries, and observe that there is a role for government in rebuilding the American economy. Nowhere is it clear, however, how intrusive a Democratic administration would be in planning, forcing "cooperation" between business and labor, picking winner and loser industries, and subsidizing "keystone" heavy industry. Nor does the platform grapple with the fundamental problem of how to encourage savings and investment by the private sector, which are indispensable to increase worker productivity and competitiveness by U.S. industry.

The Democrats laudably devote extensive attention to the fact that the United States, as an inextricable part of the world economy, must improve its trade position. However, in spite of rhetorical gestures in favor of "open" and "free" trade, and in spite of the absence of any direct reference to domestic content legislation, the platform—with one notable exception—is consistently protectionist. In veiled language, it fulfills Walter Mondale's unfortunate pledge to organized labor to match foreign governments subsidy for subsidy, and endorses the idea that foreign automakers who sell cars in the United States should make them here. As part of its industrial strategy, the platform also promises "tax, import, and regulatory relief" to chosen "basic industries"—which presumably means those with political clout rather than those with a true comparative advantage over foreign manufacturers.

The one plank that is out of keeping with the platform's generally protectionist tone recognizes that "growth and stability in the Third World depends on its ability to sell its products in international markets," and calls for open borders for goods from poor countries. This section was introduced by Mr. Jackson. Score one for him.

THE PLATFORM is quite correct, in its section on civil rights and justice, in observing that "today, a corrosive unfairness eats at the underpinnings of our society," and that the sense of community that binds Americans of

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all races and income groups is being undermined by Mr. Reagan's policies. And the President, if reelected, is likely to be in a position to appoint as many as five U.S. Supreme Court Justices, replacing the five who are now over 75 years old. The prospects of a judicial Reaganism reaching well into the twenty-first century are chilling for civil rights, civil liberties, and the ability of the government to use law to ameliorate the effects of economic disadvantage. We share the Democrats' indignation that the Reagan Justice Department has effectively switched off enforcement of the civil rights laws. We note with satisfaction that in pledging to reverse Reagan policies, the party rules out the imposition of rigid quotas to back up affirmative action programs for women and minorities, and endorses more flexible devices such as goals and timetables.

DRAWING BY BEN SARGENT FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The most disappointing section of the Democratic platform is that on foreign and defense policy. The highest purpose that America's once-great internationalist party can mention is "building a safer future" by "adapting to change." On issue after issue, and in region after region, the party makes it plain that this adaptation means withdrawal from potential danger and difficulty.

As with other sections of the platform, the foreign policy section uses rhetoric to conceal reality. "The Democratic Party has a constructive and confident vision of America's ability to use all of our economic, political, and military resources to pursue our wide-ranging security and economic interests in a diverse and changing world," the platform declares, but the details of the platform bespeak lack of real confidence in the country's ability to meet challenges from the Soviet Union and its clients. According to the platform, the gravest security dangers in the developing world flow from poverty, repression, and despair, against which "military force is of limited value." Fair enough. But it is also worth recognizing that determined, serious-minded Marxist-Leninists often exploit such conditions and find military force quite useful in doing so. The Democratic response is to propose economic assistance, economic and political reform, and funding of scholarships at American colleges. Such measures are certainly desirable and are preferable to the immediate resort to military solutions often favored by the Reagan Administration. But scholarships and economic aid are not sufficient to protect freedom in a world of Khomeinis, Qaddafis, Arafats, and Chernenkos.

The drafting of the defense and foreign policy sections of the platform was a tugging match between three elements of the party—the Coalition for a Democratic Majority, consisting of followers of the late Senator Henry Jackson; a coalition of representatives of the Hart and Jackson campaigns, who worked to pull the platform to the left; and representatives of Walter Mondale, who spent most of their time compromising with the other two groups. C.D.M. succeeded in gaining some inserts referring to "the relentless Soviet military buildup" and denunciations of Soviet repression in Afghanistan and Poland, but more often the Hart-Jackson forces succeeded in softening language about U.S. adversaries and heaping blame on the United States and its allies for problems in the world. In some key instances, Mr. Mondale's own delegates threatened to desert him; he had to retreat, for example, on his own campaign pledge of steady, sustained growth in defense spending.

There were limits to Mr. Mondale's capacity for retreat. He steadfastly rejected Mr. Jackson's proposal for recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organization and a Hart proposal practically ruling out the use of U.S. forces except when American territory is attacked. Yet on Central America, the platform was weakened to leave it in doubt whether U.S. military aid to El Salvador's democratically elected government will continue. And though the Democrats rightly would seek to negotiate a settlement with Nicaragua, they would do so only after giving up the bargaining levers of aid to anti-Sandinista guerrillas, U.S. military exercises in Honduras, and the threat of direct U.S. military intervention in the region.

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CHILDREN WILL dream of better days ahead—and not of nuclear holocaust," proclaims the platform in its preamble. For a party that yields to nobody in its nuclear awareness, however, there is rather little in its platform on the subject of national security. Its five pages on "peace" convey the confusion, and worse, the clarity, from which the Democrats now suffer.

The confusion comes from being for everything. For example: on the same page that the Republicans are attacked for stressing nuclear defense "at the expense of our conventional forces," the Republicans are also attacked for spending too much on defense. You can't have it both ways. "More bang for the buck" was the slogan behind which the nuclearization of American defenses originally took place in the early Eisenhower years, and if you want less bang, you need more buck. A renovation of the American military posture in the direction of conventional defenses (a renovation that will require the maintenance of a staggeringly strong nuclear arsenal, since only nuclear weapons deter nuclear weapons) will require precisely what the platform denounces as "a Pentagon spending binge." To be sure, the defense budget is not a holy thing; and the profligacy of the Reagan Administration ($9,600 for a $9 wrench . . .) cannot be categorically defended. But that is a question of management, not of strategy. On management, the Democratic platform wisely incorporates the principles of military reform on which the Hart campaign conferred an unexpected political prestige. On strategy, the platform remains caught between its economic desires and its desire for peace. Improving our conventional defenses for the purpose of making nuclear war less likely is a worthy aim, to which our scared skinflint allies in NATO should also subscribe; but it will not improve our deficit. And we must retain our ugly nuclear capability; the Soviet Union's ICBMs will not be deterred by a reorganization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff or a fairer system of awarding defense contracts.

Deterrence, however, does not have a starring role in the Democratic platform on defense. It makes a walk-on appearance in a single sentence, which states, correctly, that "the Democratic Party believes that the purpose of nuclear weapons is to deter war, not to fight it." That deterrence needs to be properly maintained, that it may require refinements in this weapons system or that, is a thought the authors of this document dare not think. The Democratic Party is coming before the American people not with a plan to keep the peace, but with a vision. This vision, cruelly misrepresented in the text as a "strategy," goes like this: ". . . immediate steps to stop the nuclear arms race, medium-term measures to reduce the dangers of war, and long-term goals to put the world on a new and peaceful course." The immediate step is simple: on January 20, 1985, the Democratic President "will initiate temporary, verifiable, and mutual moratoria, to be maintained for a fixed period during negotiations so long as the Soviets do the same," on the testing, development, and deployment of new ballistic missiles, nuclear weapons in space, underground and anti-satellite weapons, and sea-launched cruise missiles. And these steps "should lead promptly" to the negotiation of—here it is—"a comprehensive, mutual and verifiable freeze" on all nuclear weapons.

It's a pretty scheme, but it will not work. Not necessarily because a freeze is not verifiable; there may be a freeze (though certainly not a comprehensive freeze) that is verifiable. But there is no freeze, except a freeze of their own advantages, that the Soviet Union will accept. They will simply decline to do what is so kindly proposed; and by January 21, 1985, the Democratic President will need a different national security policy. This is not to say that there is no important kind of arms control that can be had with the Soviet Union; it is to say that the platform is positively Panglossian about the Soviet response to the ideas of American liberals. For example: in speaking of its plans for the security of NATO, the platform includes "negotiating new approaches to intermediate nuclear force limits along the lines of the 'walk in the woods' proposal." A good idea; that proposal was indeed the only fair way out of the I.N.F. impasse. Except that the Soviets summarily rejected the idea. Ronald Reagan, to be sure, rejected it too; but that does not mean that the Soviets will accept it the next time around. All this is rather reminiscent of Jimmy Carter's sincere, ambitious, and unsuccessful arms control proposals of 1977. Mr. Carter's idealism did not advance the cause of arms control. Neither will Mr. Mondale's.

THERE IS a plank in the Democratic platform on national security, however, of which the party may be proud. That is its utter impatience with President Reagan's "Star Wars" illusions. Mr. Reagan's promise to protect the American population from the nuclear missiles of the Soviet Union may be the greatest deception he has perpetrated upon us, which is saying a lot. The platform's repudiation of the militarization of space, moreover, is no less laudable. And there are other reasons for which Democrats concerned about national security can thank heaven for little favors. The Alan Cranston peace plank's provision for "no first use" was defeated in favor of language that recognizes the present imbalance in conventional strength in Europe, though the Cranston language on the freeze was incorporated in all its deluded details. And the Jackson demand for a 20 percent decrease in all of our defense spending was rejected in favor of language that spoke of "strengthening our conventional forces so as to reduce our need to rely on nuclear weapons, and to achieve this at *increased spending levels*, with funding to continue at levels appropriate to our collective security." (Italics ours; contradiction theirs.)

Still, the Democratic platform has delivered on only half the requirements of American security. It has eloquently spoken for our nuclear fear. But it has not spoken for a responsible way to cope with that fear. "A new generation of destabilizing missiles," the platform warns, "will im-

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peril all humanity." Well, all humanity is already imperiled; and perfectibilian schemes will not decrease that peril, and they may increase it. We must await Mr. Mondale's statement on the subject. Will he tell the American voters the full truth about deterrence? Or will the American voters have to choose between the chimeras of Star Wars and the freeze?

Clearly, the Democratic platform is a Mondale document, representing either his own beliefs or compromises entered into with his assent. Yet Mr. Mondale need not be limited in the Presidential campaign to the themes laid down on paper there. He can transcend the platform—indeed he must transcend it, just as he must transcend the "interest groups." He must speak of first principles, and summon an ideology that can do battle with Mr. Reagan's. Mario Cuomo's analogy of society to a family whose members disagree and even quarrel but ultimately stand by each other is a starting point—a conception which the electorate will understand and very likely prefer to Ronald Reagan's vision of a nation of atomized, relentlessly competing individuals.

Mr. Mondale also needs to begin to reveal himself to the electorate as his friends know him—as a spontaneous, funny, irreverent, and down-to-earth human being, rather than the plastic Washington politician he often seems. Mondale did reveal a tough side for the first time during the primary campaign against Mr. Hart. We assume that whatever ire he felt toward his fellow Democrat is pale by comparison to that he feels toward Mr. Reagan. He needs to show that—and righteous indignation too.

Hardest of all, perhaps, but most necessary, we need to see a vision of a better future from Mr. Mondale, a summing up of what he is all about. His failure to articulate such a vision bedeviled his campaign for the nomination and leaves him alarmingly far behind as the general election struggle begins. He must begin to remedy that in San Francisco. In this long, long campaign, the time is short.

THE THIRD CANDIDATE'S WORLD

What is left to say in defense of Jesse Jackson and his campaign? Very little. There's no longer even much talk about that widely touted, sloppily calculated 2 million net increase in Democratic voters, mostly black. For such numbers, it seemed, anything might be indulged—even traffic with tyrants and in anti-Semitism. Yet the overwhelming majority of the 3.2 million votes Mr. Jackson actually got were not, as it happens, from first-time voters. Consider how few Jackson voters would hesitate to vote against Ronald Reagan, and how many defections Mr. Jackson's continued close identification with the party may impel from other traditionally Democratic voters—trade unionists, Jews, Catholics, old-fashioned patriots. If you're still expecting some sort of *net* at all, it's likely to be not a net gain but a net loss. Not good news for anybody, except the Republicans.

ONE DOES still hear, now and then, that Mr. Jackson put some pizzazz into a dreary campaign. Even at this late date there are still patronizing liberals who would rather praise a black man's stylish form than critically assess his shabby substance—although condescending approval from a stratum of society which can tolerate anything except boredom will not make much political difference. And Mr. Jackson's talent for political theater—his ability to rouse audiences, his instinct for the unconventional—has sustained the interest of the media, more than his performance at the polls would warrant and certainly more than is merited if we take his own goal of establishing an authentically cross-ethnic, interracial rainbow coalition as a measure. The Mondale rainbow has more colors and more people of color, too—an almost unrecognized achievement. *The New York Times*/CBS News poll reports, in fact, that black voters in the country as a whole prefer Mr. Mondale to Mr. Jackson for President by a margin of 5 to 3.

This sustained interest of the media may appear, at least to Mr. Jackson's black supporters, to be evidence of his and their signal achievements. "I am somebody" is the plaintive assertion of what has become virtually his official campaign song, the hymn of his movement. It is America's greatest ongoing tragedy that so many people of color feel so poignantly that they are individually nobody because of the social and economic conditions of their race. There is large truth to their feeling. But it is far from clear, given the internal demographic and psychosocial problems of the black community—children with one parent growing up unemployable—how a sheerly political movement could remedy that sense of inadequate self-worth. And whatever else Mr. Jackson may have attained for himself by way of attention, he has not won the respect he has demanded. Respect, in any case, is not awarded on demand. What he has been ceded by the party's managers, is a set of concessions meant to placate and buy off. Insincerely intended, these concessions will nonetheless offend those who believe Mr. Jackson's views should have read him, if not out of the party, then out of the broad moral community encompassed in the party—as George Wallace, who in 1972 actually won primaries in Michigan, Maryland, North Carolina, Florida, and Tennessee, and who ran a close second in Indiana, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania, was formally in the party but decisively not a part of its moral community.

It cannot be denied, however tragic it may be, that several million blacks have linked their own self-esteem to the system's palpable regard or disregard of Mr. Jackson. But it is genuinely tragic nonetheless, and in more ways than one. Notice first the most prosaic: how Mr. Jackson has tried to ensure that he alone among black Democratic political figures be recognized as the tribune for black aspirations in the party. How else can we explain his churlish effort to derail the Vice Presidential chances of

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Tom Bradley, a man who early on tested the system to judge him fairly? With the convention days away, Mr. Jackson was still deprecating Mr. Bradley ("Bradley's a good man, but . . .") and Mayor Wilson Goode of Philadelphia to a *New York Times* interviewer. The goal here, then, is not black power or minority power in the Democracy; it is Jackson power. Mr. Jackson goes on to complain to the *Times* that Mr. Mondale has not considered him for Vice President. Mr. Mondale deserves praise for declining such a charade.

IT WOULD be a mistake, however, to see in Jesse Jackson's campaign only his ambition for himself. Jackson power would be power with purpose; and its purpose in the Democratic Party, insofar as it is equated through Mr. Jackson with the expressed interests and concerns of black people, isolates them even more from the rest of the American people. This is the wider tragedy. Content with the most vapid of clichés, indifferent to questions of concrete policy, reliant on a rhetoric of resentment and entitlement, Mr. Jackson has failed to project anything like a coherent vision of a just society at home, which might bind blacks and whites together.

What Mr. Jackson has succeeded in projecting, all too vividly, is his vision of the American role in international affairs, his vision not only by extension but explicitly of an acceptable or desirable world order. This world order is one made safe for dictatorships, comfortable for those arrogant totalitarians or more primitive fanatics busy remaking societies and men with such confidence that their brutality respects no limits and yields to no doubts. Who are the world leaders with whom Mr. Jackson feels bonds of solidarity? Assad, Qaddafi, Castro—men whose regimes perpetuate, rather than break, the dominion of what Mr. Jackson likes to call "the cycle of pain." Where there is evil in the world, Mr. Jackson and his claque of sympathizers with Leninist realpolitik look out for and condemn only the United States. Theirs is a Manichean universe, as simple as Ronald Reagan's and considerably more distant from fact. On Soviet power and its impact Mr. Jackson is silent; on the depredations of the Soviet Union and its clients he is understanding, even solicitous and empathetic. Forced somehow to acknowledge a wrong in the Communist bloc or in the Third World, he sees its origins in America. But mostly he sees good in the cruel places, save for those cruel places in which Mr. Reagan sometimes unaccountably sees good.

Jesse Jackson is not the first American public figure and certainly not the first black American public figure to challenge what there is—or what there is left—of a national consensus on foreign policy. And it would surely be just another manifestation of rank racism if black leaders were enjoined from dissent or even radical dissent on foreign policy. But they are also not to be made immune to the meaning and consequences of their political views: it would be racism of yet another sort if these views were not to be seen and characterized as what they are. And unlike Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who campaigned against the Vietnam War in the name of the democratic values to which he proposed to hold his country, Mr. Jackson has espoused views that are anti-democratic on the philosophical plane and anti-American on the strategic plane. His dissent, after all, is not on means but on ends. His differences with Mr. Reagan are not like Mr. Mondale's or Senator Hart's. Fritz Mondale does not see an ally for decency in Fidel Castro. Mr. Mondale disagrees with the President on how the United States might help El Salvador achieve democracy, but one thing he doesn't believe—history does teach some of us something!—is that the Marxist guerrillas are democrats. But Mr. Jackson is for them even knowing that they aren't—and for the Cubans in the Caribbean, the Syrians and the P.L.O. in the Middle East, the Libyans in North Africa. Not a good prospect for democracy, and not a bad one for the Russians.

Seen in this perspective, there was nothing surprising in the release to candidate Jackson by Syria's Assad of Lieutenant Goodman and by Mr. Castro of twenty-two Americans (predominantly drug-runners) and twenty-seven Cuban political prisoners, prisoners of conscience, most of whom were being held, as it were, already way beyond their sentences. These developments represented no triumph of Jacksonian diplomacy, no harbinger of how relations between adversaries could be improved. The two acts were acts of collusion between tyrants, and the one American politician whose enhanced sway in public opinion would most advance their drive for hegemony in their respective regions. Still, however sympathetic Mr. Jackson may be to the butcher of Damascus, it was surprising to hear him say that the Syrians actually had the right to kill Lieutenant Goodman. No one has the right to kill a prisoner of war; if Mr. Jackson thinks that is a captor's right, he is callous indeed. Callousness—or is it actually sympathy?—may also explain why he can't see the Cuban tyranny for what it is, as so many of Mr. Castro's jailed comrades have, but is stirred instead by its Potemkin-village façade of humane prisons. Not since Henry Wallace visited the Gulag forty years ago has an American politician been so oblivious to the agony of the people oppressed by his genial hosts. In Catholic Nicaragua, Mr. Jackson bypassed the Catholics to get his information on the state of freedom in that country from the local representatives of the World Council of Churches, a body that can be counted on to paint a rosy picture of dictatorship provided it is dictatorship of the left.

MR. JACKSON is quite candid in what he wants the Democratic Party to stand for in foreign policy. His is a Third World agenda, an agenda which, though it originates with the heirs of the white New Left, altogether naturally has adherents among America's racial minorities. But the Third World agenda will inevitably place little emphasis on democratic values. So it will run against the ideological inclinations of most whites in the party and, in fact, also against both the ideological commitments and real interests of most blacks and other racial minorities,

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who only now are beginning to experience in their own lives the long and cruelly delayed fulfillment of the democratic promise. There is among those minorities a quiet struggle between one leadership, mostly municipal officials committed to real coalition-building for a politics of practical justice, and another leadership, as over-represented in Congress as blacks in general are under-represented, whose flights of ideological fancy reflect a left-wing fashion in part of the black community. One has only to listen to talk shows on black radio stations to understand how deep are the roots in their communities, particularly among the young, of this latter leadership. This is the leadership which abused Eugenia George, the black prime minister of the Commonwealth of Dominica, when she came before the Congressional Black Caucus to plead the justice of the Grenadan intervention.

Facile talk about our intrinsically racist foreign policy has an emotional appeal against which an argument for incremental and painfully won gains cannot always prevail. So the corrosive alienation of many blacks from the long-term purposes of American foreign policy, among which a resistance to Soviet expansionism must be central, is a problem not only for blacks but for the Democratic Party, and the country, as a whole. That alienation is, alas, something that most Republicans do not grasp. The Reaganites refuse to understand how their domestic policies and their philosophic dogmas, their doctrines of greed which enthrone speculators and speculation and which sever the bonds of moral obligation and duty between individuals and among classes and races, have contributed to and exacerbated this alienation. But if the Democratic Party tries to accommodate itself to, rather than combat, this alienation, it will be left not only with an ever dwindling minority of whites but also, it seems likely over the long run, a minority of blacks and Hispanics too. Already the Democratic Party has been in the last four Presidential elections a distinctly minority party among white voters, with only 36 percent of them in 1980. This cannot be good for the party; and it cannot be good for blacks either, who would be left with a political mechanism abandoned by some of its most faithful supporters, an American version of the British Labour Party at its most forlorn.

If the accelerated abandonment of the party actually occurs this year, among the most critical abandoners, it is feared, will be the Jews, pivotally concentrated in the big electoral vote states and historically relied upon to turn in lopsided Democratic majorities. Despite economic interests, they have stubbornly persisted in cleaving to the Democratic Party, with only marginal attrition to the Republicans. What will have changed now? Certainly not the position of the Democratic Party toward Israel, an abiding concern of Jewish voters. Indeed, were only Israel in their mind, Mr. Mondale's record would help solidify the Jewish vote; and just in the category of incumbent Republican

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Senators, the Democratic candidates in at least three cases (Hunt vs. Helms, Harken vs. Jepsen, Simon vs. Percy) pose very welcome alternatives. To be sure, some friends of Israel have developed a new appreciation of the overall contextual value of a strong defense which may incline them to the Republicans; and the G.O.P.'s sharper opposition to quotas may engage the sympathy of some Jews in the middle and particularly lower-middle classes. This issue remains the festering conflict between many Jews and many blacks, unresolved and perhaps unresolvable in the short run. If some blacks have not appreciated the fear which a *numerus clausus* provokes among Jews, some Jews—and some Jewish organizations that should know better—have not grasped the depth of despair which has induced blacks to seek redress for their cumulative disadvantages through quotas.

THE PARTY has contained the bitterness surrounding this issue by hedging its definition of the kind of affirmative action it supports. But this year the unstable peace has been upset by the perception among Jews (and others, too) that Jesse Jackson is a visceral anti-Semite, whose apologies, like an alcoholic's vows of abstinence, are prelude to further indulgence. It was not just the Hymie remark; that crude nomenclature was only one—and not the last—in a series of statements, gestures, and acts that put Jews on edge. (See "Jackson and the Jews," TNR, March 19.) No sooner had he persuaded the press and his Democratic opponents that he hadn't really meant anything offensive than his associate and his designated campaign "surrogate," Louis Farrakhan, let forth a series of anti-Semitic volleys of a vileness not seen in American public life since before World War II. Even Mr. Jackson was forced, however squeamishly, to distance himself in a formal statement—not from the man, he insisted, but only from his views. And this candidate, for whom repetition is the favored cadence, wouldn't be pushed into saying again, or even saying aloud, what had been said for him on paper. Still, *The Boston Globe* quickly editorialized that Mr. Jackson "did the right thing." And the two other candidates heaved sighs of relief that were supposed to echo reassuringly from Great Neck to Santa Monica. They didn't, least of all among those genuine Black Muslims, like Muhammad Ali, mortified by the usurper of their name and faith and by that Christian minister who fumes with righteousness against all the unrighteous, save those unrighteous in his own camp. And right down to the wire, Mr. Jackson was complaining, in the *Times* interview, of "threats to Mondale by a significant number of Jewish leaders" (to keep Mr. Mondale from considering him for Vice President) and of a "struggle by Jewish leaders to make me a pariah and isolate our support, attempt to separate me from the masses."

The anti-Semitism in the Jackson campaign also has a context, and that context is the Third World agenda. Anti-Zionism is sometimes the guise under which lurks anti-Semitism; and as time goes on candor takes over, as it has done now on many occasions with both Mr. Jackson and his friend. The relentless attack on America's alliance with Israel by Mr. Jackson and other ideological Third Worlders represents, for them literally and for the world symbolically, an attack on any American alliance with besieged democracies. Israel is useful to this critique because there is always some additional hay to be made with some people by Jew-bashing. But among which people? Here the Third World agenda coincides with the lure of anti-Semitism, and it coincides particularly among younger blacks. The higher up the education scale you go, moreover, the more you will find black anti-Semitism. Every poll on the subject confirms this finding. This is a great and painful anomaly: for in other groups, as the level of education rises the incidence of bias declines. So it is with whites, including Jews, as regards blacks, and with white non-Jews as regards Jews. This exception is, then, also a problem for the Democratic Party. It may be covered up, but that won't make it disappear.

Clichéd though it may sound, the party is now at a crossroads. Down one road is the path of accommodation to ugly instincts in both the international and domestic arenas. The other road is full of intellectual and psychological impediments, but its goals are familiar and still stirring: an America confident in its own striving toward equal and integrated justice, confident also that its ongoing active role in the world, not always perfect or even near-perfect, is still the greatest hope for the survival of freedom and democracy. If the Democratic Party wishes to take that other, better road—and it must if it wishes to survive—then it had better confront and conquer the negative energies which, along with some positive ones, the Jesse Jackson campaign has released.

NOTEBOOK

□ MUCH AS WE REVERE our colleague TRB, we dissent from his condemnation of the National Endowment for Democracy ("Intellectual Pork Barrel," July 2, 1984). The Endowment made an error, as new institutions are wont to do, in allowing one of its grantees, the A.F.L.-C.I.O.'s American Institute for Free Labor Development, to give $20,000 to a candidate in Panama's recent elections. The N.E.D. board has since ruled out such interventions in foreign elections. Other projects of the Endowment offer promise, such as aid to East bloc dissidents and publication of their writings, sponsoring of training sessions for democratic trade unionists and politicians in the Third World, and assistance for a newspaper to circulate among mainland Chinese studying in the West. We hope Congress will reverse the House's cutoff of all N.E.D. funding and give this experiment in overt democracy-building a try. If it doesn't work after five years or so, Congress can kill it and let the West Germans (who do it N.E.D.'s way, openly) and the C.I.A. underwrite ideological combat with the enemies of freedom.

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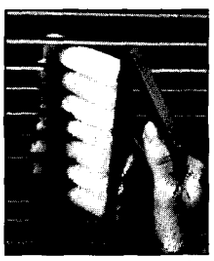

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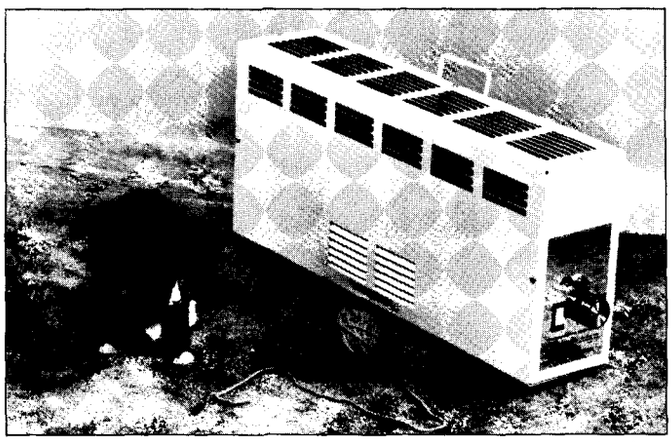

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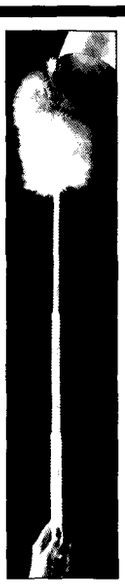

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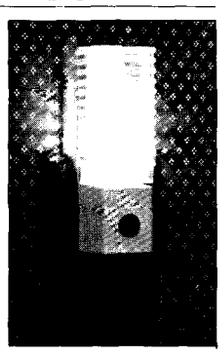

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□ HARPER & ROW has published *Partners*, a collection of funny pieces by Veronica Geng. A couple of them first appeared in THE NEW REPUBLIC.

□ FORTY YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "On the domestic front, the chief event was, of course, the Democratic Party Convention. The renomination of President Roosevelt was a foregone conclusion and the only real interest was in the fight for the Vice Presidency. Mr. Wallace was defeated by an effective combination of all the worst elements in the Democratic Party—the corrupt big-city machines of Kelly, Hague, and Flynn; the Southern Tories; the unscrupulous national chairman, Robert Hannegan, who degraded his office by participating in a fight between two factions. The residuary heir of these political machinations was Senator Harry Truman of Missouri, who is on the whole a good man and deserved better than to be foisted upon the party by its worst elements. The result is the serious disaffection by northern liberals, trade unionists, and Negroes, in the states which Mr. Roosevelt most badly needs to win." ("The Democrats Meet," The Editors, July 31, 1944.)

CROSSCURRENTS

FROM BAD TO WORTH

THE LATEST entry on the list of sacred Democratic causes is comparable worth. According to that doctrine, it is demonstrable that low-paying female-dominated jobs, like nursing, are worth as much (to employers or society) as "comparable" male-dominated jobs, like plumbing, and that therefore by right and by law they should be paid the same. Comparable worth has become not only *the* women's issue of the 1980s but also the most prominent civil rights issue not specifically directed at blacks. The Democratic Party has warmly embraced it. Every one of its Presidential candidates has endorsed it. In the 1984 platform, that sea of well-intended ambiguity and evasion, there are few islands of certainty. Comparable worth is one of them.

Comparable worth is advancing in the courts, too. Three years ago the Supreme Court opened the door a crack by ruling that female prison guards could sue for violation of the equal-pay provisions of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, even though they did not do precisely the same work as the better-paid male prison guards. That narrow ruling was broken open last December in a sweeping victory for comparable worth in Washington State. A federal district judge found the state guilty of massive discrimination because its female-dominated jobs were paying less than "comparable" male-dominated jobs. He ordered an immediate increase in the women's wages and restitution for past injury. The back pay alone will run into the hundreds of millions of dollars.

Comparable worth may indeed be an idea whose time has come. Where does it come from? When the plumber makes a house call and charges $40 an hour to fix a leak, the instinct of most people is to suspect that the plumber is overpaid—the beneficiary of some combination of scarce skills, powerful unions, and dumb luck. The instinct of comparable worth advocates is to see the plumber's wage as a standard of fairness, to conclude that the rest of us (meaning: women) are underpaid, and to identify discrimination as the source of that underpayment. But since overt discrimination on the basis of sex has been legally forbidden for twenty years, to make that charge stick nowadays requires a bit of subtlety.

One claim is that women's wages are depressed today because of a legacy of past discrimination: namely, the "crowding" of women into certain fields (like nursing, teaching, secretarial work), thus artificially depressing their wages. Did sexual stereotyping really "crowd" women into their jobs? Sexual stereotyping worked both ways: it kept women in, but it also kept men out, thus artificially excluding potential wage competition from half the population, and, more important, from about two-thirds to three-quarters of the labor force (because of the higher participation rate of men). Sex-segregation is obviously unfair, but it is hard to see how it caused downward pressure on women's wages when, at the same time, through the socially enforced exclusion of men, it sheltered "women's work" from a vast pool of competitors. Moreover, as the social barriers that kept men and women from entering each other's traditional fields have fallen during the last twenty years, there has been much more movement of women into men's fields than vice versa. "Women's work" is less crowded than ever.

IF THE crowding argument is weak, then one is forced to resort to the "grand conspiracy" theory. "The system of wages was set up by a grand conspiracy, so to speak, that has held down the wages of women to minimize labor costs," explained the business agent of the union that in 1981 struck for and won a famous comparable-worth settlement in San Jose. But since to minimize labor costs employers try to hold down the wages of everyone, the thrust of the argument must be that there is a particular desire to do so additionally in the case of women. In other words, the market is inherently discriminatory. Women nurses are paid less than they deserve, simply because they are women. How to prove it? Comparing their wages to that of male nurses won't do, since their pay is, by law, equal. So one must compare nurses' wages to that of, say, plumbers, show that nurses make less, and claim that nurses are discriminated against because they deserve—they are worth—the same.

What is the basis of that claim? In San Jose, Washington State, and other comparable worth cases, the basis is a "study." A consultant is called in to set up a committee to rank every job according to certain criteria. In Washington

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State, the "Willis" scale gives marks for "knowledge and skills," "mental demands," "accountability," and "working conditions." The committee then awards points in each category to every job, tallies them up, and declares those with equal totals to have—*voila!*—comparable worth.

There is no need to belabor the absurdity of this system, so I'll stick to the high points. It is, above all, a mandate for arbitrariness: every subjective determination, no matter how whimsically arrived at, is first enshrined in a number to give it an entirely specious solidity, then added to another number no less insubstantial, to yield a total entirely meaningless. (An exercise: compare, with numbers, the "mental demands" on a truck driver and a secretary.) Everything is arbitrary: the categories, the rankings, even the choice of judges. And even if none of this were true, even if every category were ontologically self-evident, every ranking mathematically precise, every judge Solomonic, there remains one factor wholly unaccounted for which permits the system to be skewed in any direction one wishes: the *weight* assigned to each category. In the Willis scale, points for "knowledge and skills" are worth as much as points for "working conditions." But does ten points in knowledge and skills make up for ten points in hazardous working conditions? Who is to say that a secretary's two years of college are equal in worth to—and not half or double the worth of—the trucker's risk of getting killed on the highways? Mr. Willis, that's who.

Conclusions based on such "studies" are not a whit less capricious than the simple assertion, "secretaries are worth as much as truck drivers." Trotting out Willis, of course, allows you to dress up a feeling in scientific trappings. It allows H.R. 4599, Representative Mary Rose Oakar's bill legislating comparable worth in federal employment, to dispose of the arbitrariness problem in the *definitions*. "Job evaluation technique" is defined as "an objective method of determining the comparable value of different jobs." Next problem.

SOME ADVOCATES of comparable worth, aware of this objectivity conundrum and perhaps less confident that it can be defined out of existence, propose an alternate solution. Instead of ranking the intrinsic worth of the job (by admittedly arbitrary criteria), they propose ranking the worth of the worker. Barbara Bergmann, an economist at the University of Maryland, believes that people with similar qualifications, training, and experience should be receiving the same return on their "human capital." Breaking new ground in discrimination theory, she claims that "in a nondiscriminatory setup, identical people should be paid identically." And what makes people identical? Their credentials: qualifications, training, experience. This is not just credentialism gone wild, and highly disadvantageous to non-yuppy workers with poor résumés, who need the help of the women's movement the most; it leads to the logical absurdity that people should be paid not for the actual work they do, but for the work they *could* do. We've gone from equal pay for equal work to equal pay for comparable work, to equal pay for potential work. Summarizing the Bergmann position, the Center for Philosophy in Public Policy at the University of Maryland explains helpfully that "if a nursing supervisor could do the work of a higher-paid hospital purchasing agent, then her wages should be the same as his." But why stop there? What if her credentials are the same as those of the hospital administrator, or her city councillor, or her U.S. Senator? And what about the starving actress, waiting on tables for a living? If she can act as well as Bo Derek (to set a standard anyone can meet), shouldn't she be getting a million dollars a year—that is, if the "setup" is to deserve the adjective "nondiscriminatory"?

NOW, EVEN if there were a shred of merit in any of these systems for determining comparable worth, we should be wary of implementing them if only because of the sheer social chaos they would create. The only sure consequence of comparable worth one can foresee was described by the winning attorney in the Washington State case: "This decision . . . should stimulate an avalanche of private litigation on behalf of the victims of discrimination." The judicial and bureaucratic monster comparable worth will call into being—a whole new layer of judges, court-appointed "masters" (there already is one in the Washington State suit), lawyers, and consultants—will not just sit once to fix wages and then retire. The process will be endless. Fairness will require constant readjustment. There will still exist such a thing as supply and demand. Even if comparable worth advocates succeed in abolishing it for women's work (remember, Washington State was found to have broken the law for paying women market wages rather than comparable worth wages), it will still operate for men's wages, the standard by which women's (comparable worth) wages will be set. Now, what if nurses are awarded plumbers' pay, and there develops a housing slowdown and a plumber surplus, and plumbers' wages fall? Will nurses' salaries have to be ratcheted down? And if not, what is to prevent the plumbers from suing, alleging they are underpaid relative to comparably equal nurses?

Which brings us to the equity problem. Almost everyone feels he or she is underpaid. Moreover, even a plumber can point to at least one person or group of persons who are getting more than they are "worth." Why can't he claim that class of people as the equitable standard, and march to court demanding restitution? If comparable worth is simple justice, as its advocates claim, why should only women be entitled to it? Why not comparable worth for everyone?

The whole search for the "just wage," which is what comparable worth is all about, is, like the search for the "just price," inherently elusive in a capitalist system. It is not that justice has nothing to say about wages and prices in a market economy, but that what it does say it says negatively. For example, it declares that whatever the wage, it must be the same for people regardless of sex, race, or other characteristics; but it doesn't say what the

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wage should be. Even the minimum-wage law says merely that a wage may not be below a certain floor. (Even capitalism has a notion of exploitative labor.) Beyond that, the law is silent. The reason it is silent, the reason we decide to let the market decide, is no great mystery. It was first elaborated by Adam Smith, and amplified by the experience of the Soviet Union and other command economies. Market economies are agnostic on the question of a just wage or a just price not simply because of a philosophical belief that the question, if it is a question, is unanswerable, but also because of the belief, and the experience, that attempts to answer it have a habit of leaving everyone worse off than before.

Finally, even granting that women in traditionally female jobs are underpaid, it is not as if we live in a fixed economy which blocks off all avenues of redress. If secretaries are indeed paid less than they are "worth," they have several options. One is suggested by Coleman Young, the mayor of Detroit, a former labor leader and no conservative: "If a painter makes more than a secretary, then let more women be painters. Equal opportunity and affirmative action is how you do that." A woman entering the labor force today has no claim that she has been crowded into low-paying professions because of discrimination. She has choices.

Older women, of course, who have already invested much in their professions, are more constrained. But they have the same avenues open to them—such as organizing—as other similarly constrained (predominantly male) workers who struggle for higher wages in other settings. In Denver, for example, nurses sought comparable worth wage gains in court and lost; they then went on strike and won. True, in some occupations, even strong unions can't raise wages very much. But as the president of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (85 percent female) explained in objecting to a highfalutin A.F.L.-C.I.O. endorsement of comparable worth, the problem is not discrimination but the market. His workers have low wages because they compete with workers overseas who are paid thirty cents an hour. Comparable worth doctrine may declare that garment workers ought to be making as much as truck drivers. But if the theory ever became practice, garment workers would be free of more than discrimination. They would be free of their jobs.

WHY IS the obvious about comparable worth so rarely heard? Why is it for Democrats the ultimate motherhood issue? Because here again the party of the big heart identifies a class of people who feel they aren't getting their just due, blames that condition on a single cause (discrimination), then offers a "rational" solution, on whose messy details it prefers not to dwell. But those details add up to a swamp of mindless arbitrariness and bureaucratic inefficency, shrouded in a fine mist of pseudo-scientific objectivity. And the surest results will be unending litigation and an entirely new generation of inequities. These inequities, moreover, will be frozen in place by force of law, and thus that much more difficult to dislodge.

Comparable worth asks the question: How many nurses would it take to screw in a lightbulb? The joke is that, having not the faintest idea, it demands that a committee invent an answer, that the answer become law, and that the law supplant the market. Even Karl Marx, who also had legitimate complaints about the equity of wages set by the market, had a more plausible alternative.

CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

POST CARD

THE JACKSON TOUR

Panama City

JESSE JACKSON is early, a rare event. It is 7 A.M. and very muggy, and Jackson's chartered jet, fresh from Chicago, rests in a remote corner of the airport. The mayor of Panama City, who is supposed to deliver the formal greeting here, is nowhere in sight. He never does show up. But Jackson, who has been stiffed before, is unfazed. He sits on his plane for forty-five minutes, then debarks, wearing a blue safari suit, for a chat with minor Panamanian officials and for a press conference held in a low-ceilinged lounge area.

He is traveling reasonably light. There are sixty-three media folks and twenty-seven Secret Service agents, but only two dozen Jackson aides. I use the word "aides" loosely. Maybe four are full-time staffers—press secretary Frank Watkins, Latin American adviser Armando Guttierez, a speechwriter, a translator. The rest are hangers-on, including ministers from San Francisco and Boston, an analyst from the Council on Hemispheric Affairs in Washington, an elderly fellow from Chicago with shoulder-length gray hair, and Jackson's three sons. They may not constitute a brain trust, but they take their prerogatives seriously. When reporters commandeer the "staff van" in Panama City, the hangers-on huffily order them back to the press bus.

Why has Jackson come? "Our Rainbow Coalition must function beyond conventional politics," Jackson says. He gives ten reasons for his "mission for peace," most of them critical of United States policy in Central America and the Caribbean, none of them critical of the Sandinistas, Cuba, or the Marxist guerrillas in El Salvador. He has come to stop "a war that would spread like a brushfire in this hemisphere." The Reagan Administration is wrongly "taking sides, instead of helping to reconcile the conflict," and he cites the effort to overthrow the Sandinistas. Does he also think the Sandinistas and Cubans are trying to overthrow the government of El Salvador, and will he ask them to stop? "It would not be appropriate to answer that." To Jackson, there are no enemies on the left.

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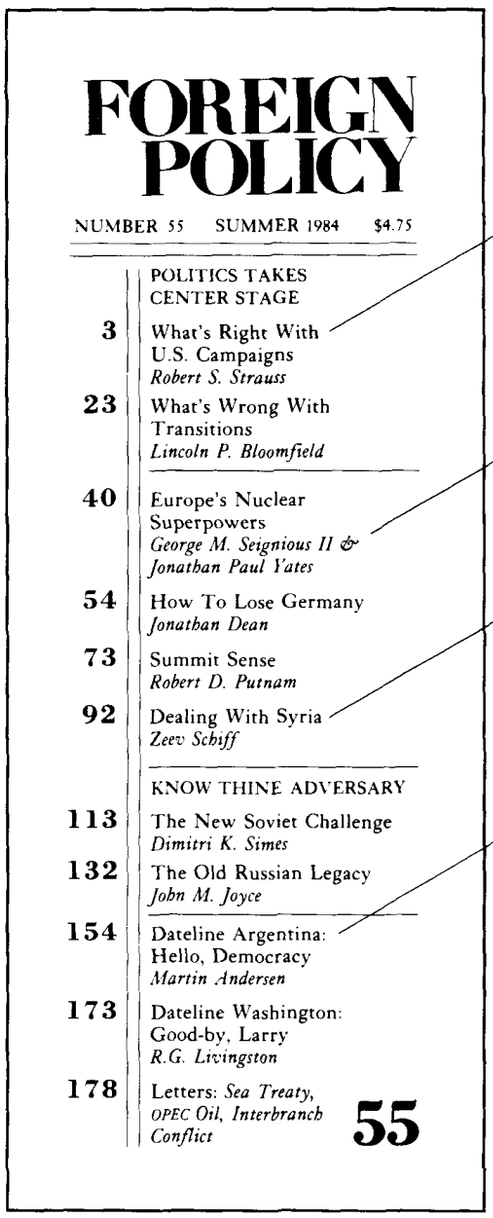

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The meeting that matters is Jackson's all-day session with the leaders of the political and military branches of the Marxist forces in El Salvador. They gather in Room 516 of the Panama Hilton around a coffee table filled with empty orange juice glasses. Jackson is bristling with confidence; the half-dozen exiles look pale and tired. As expected, Jackson emerges to claim progress toward peace. The exiles are willing to go to El Salvador to discuss a cease-fire. Jackson says he will raise the proposal with President José Napoleón Duarte of El Salvador.

San Salvador

THIS IS just a six-hour drop-by for Jackson, but the Secret Service is anxious. "Just give us lots of room," an agent tells reporters. Certainly Duarte gives them plenty at the airport—he sends no greeting party at all, not even a minion. Jackson and Duarte confer inside the whitewashed presidential palace, and then talk to reporters on the palace steps. Duarte is a full head shorter than Jackson, and his slicked-down hair and unstylish suit reinforce his generally unimpressive appearance. But Jackson has met his match in Duarte, who provides the best double-talk since Abbott and Costello. Duarte says the rebels' proposal brought to him by Jackson is not new, except that it is new. Before it was offered as a tactical maneuver by the rebels, but now it's a real proposal, a difference subtle enough to elude me. Duarte, noting that he was elected by the people, will present the proposal "to the people" and await their verdict. He sets no timetable. All this amounts to unceremonious rejection, but what can Jackson say? That "the people" shouldn't be heard? He is outfoxed. So he falls back on his old standby, the declaration of victory. Once more, he says, he has produced progress toward peace.

Havana

FROM THE moment Jackson sets foot in Cuba, Fidel Castro is all over him like a cheap suit. And why not? Any man who once saw his way clear to devote three straight eighteen-hour days to C. Wright Mills, the sociologist, is bound to have time for Jackson. At the airport (where, back in form, Jackson has arrived three hours late, after dark), Castro bounds forward to shake Jackson's hand at the foot of the plane's ramp. Then Castro and Jackson, who constitute a two-man Western hemisphere charisma cartel, march off to a limousine at the head of a motorcade. The car looks like a 1950s Packard, with modest fins in back and a massive grille in front. At second glance, it turns out to be a Soviet-made Chaika, derivative right down to the felt seat-covers.

Jackson's first stop is for dinner at his V.I.P. digs, and Castro sits in. Beside the swimming pool, they gather around a table brimming with meat and fruit, and Jackson holds forth about how the time is ripe for normalized relations between the United States and Cuba. Castro says practically nothing, except for the noncommittal, "That's all very interesting." Then they move on to a song-and-dance performance at the National Theater of Cuba. Castro wisely leaves after ten minutes. The show is amateurish. To give you an idea, one of the songs is entitled, "People Is Your Name." Jackson, who later says politely that he noticed strains of José Feliciano and Stevie Wonder in the music, isn't humming when he leaves.

The next morning Jackson gets a daylight view of Havana. The place is weathered and dreary, like one of those American cities whose downtown deteriorated after the shopping mall opened in the suburbs. Jackson visits a museum and a hospital. He pumps a health ministry official with question after question, all playing up the idea of free health care. Are illegimate children treated the same as legitimate kids? Do the poor get turned away? How much are doctors paid? Do poor students have a shot at medical school? The official notes that applicants for medical school must pass an ideological litmus test of their zeal for the revolution. Jackson does not raise an eyebrow at this. On his way out, he signs the hospital's guest book: "Health is wealth. Health is for everyone. Peace!"

In the afternoon, the serious talks begin at the Palace of the Revolution, a hulking, breathtakingly ugly building that could have been designed by the same guy who laid out the Pentagon. First there is a large gathering, with all the Jackson hangers-on present. The press is invited to photograph this session, and reporters and cameramen rush around the table like paparazzi. An ABC reporter negotiates with Jackson over a possible "Nightline" appearance. Castro quickly grows wary and signals an aide to remove the horde. Later, two Jackson associates give reporters a flavor of the meeting. Castro, they indicate, is a rousing speaker who starts slowly and builds to a crescendo—like a preacher. After one Castro volley, they recall, Jackson turns to the Cuban and says, "Thank you, Reverend Castro." One reporter notes how odd that statement is, since Castro is an atheist. "He is?" one of the Jackson associates says. "Really?" says the other. They seem to have thought he was a Catholic boy made good in politics, like a Kennedy or Tip O'Neill.

As is the rule with the Jackson campaign, the press (paying $2,282 per person for the trip, hotels and meals not included) is told almost nothing about what is going on. Watkins, Jackson's press aide, never darkens the door of the Havana Libre Hotel, where the reporters are staying. Watkins does have time, though, to get Castro's autograph on a Cuban 3 peso bill. For meals and a room, reporters pay $120 a day, in cash dollars, no pesos accepted.

I foolishly exchange $40 for pesos, only to find nowhere to spend it. In the hotel press room, the telephone people (they charge $3 a minute, minimum $9, cash required, to call the United States) won't take it. Upon checking out, I ask the hotel cashier to exchange the pesos back into dollars. No way. The hotel has Miami Beach architecture, but its restaurant is something right out of Eastern Europe: strictly buffet, and the skimpy menu never changes. The food ranges from edible to awful, the decor is gloomy, the waiters lugubrious. But it is a good place for yogurt eaters. Pitchers of plain and strawberry yogurt, the noncongealed

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variety, are kept filled. You can probably guess why. Yep, Castro likes yogurt. Years ago, he imported a Bulgarian culture, and yogurt has been a politically acceptable health food in Cuba ever since.

Jackson's attitude toward Cuba is similar to Shirley MacLaine's toward China in the 1970s, or the Webbs' toward the Soviet Union in the 1920s: in a word, ga-ga. Jackson visits the schools on the Isle of Youth and finds them "creative." In truth, they are the essence of totalitarianism, where Cuban children are leached of what a pro-Castro American tells me are their "backward attitudes." There are also schools for kids from Ethiopia, Angola, Mozambique—any place the contingent of Cuban troops has reached a critical mass. Castro skips the trip to the Isle of Youth, but he arrives ahead of Jackson at the next stop, the University of Havana, to welcome him personally. He leads Jackson through a crowd that chants "Fi-del, Fi-del." Inside an ornate hall with pictures of nymphs on the wall, Jackson unveils his Third World outlook, now fully crystallized. "Industrial powers purposefully and consciously structured their relations with weaker societies in such a way that the 'natural' operations of this structure would reproduce and exaggerate an already asymmetric relationship," he says. Castro later calls Jackson's speech "profound."

As he gets ready to leave, Jackson claims victory again, asserting that Castro has joined his "moral offensive" for peace. Besides, he has gotten Castro's agreement to turn over twenty-two American prisoners, mostly small-time drug traffickers. Big deal, reporters write. Where are the political prisoners? Castro supplies them before Jackson boards his plane, promising to free twenty-six Cubans. Reporters, whose tendency is always to inflate their own importance, suspect Castro of peeking at their stories and realizing he hadn't given Jackson enough to generate favorable coverage. Not likely. Castro, a skillful pol, simply saved something for the last, a bouquet for Jackson's departure. And it works.

Managua

SANDINISTA officialdom, teeming and officious, is like Cuba's except less efficient. Somehow, the Sandinista minions manage to keep most reporters from seeing Jackson at all outside of his arrival and departure at the airport. They bus the press corps to a dinner for Jackson, but he has already left. The next morning they promise reporters breakfast and a chance to hear Jackson address Sandinista leaders, but then cart them off to a shack with a corrugated roof to inspect their equipment for weapons and explosives. No breakfast. Most reporters choose to return to the Intercontinental Hotel and catch Jackson's press conference at the airport. A few hardy souls decide to go where Jackson is staying, a suburban-looking residence called Protocol House. Sure enough, he emerges for a poolside press conference at which he announces more progress toward peace. He is lavish in his praise for the Sandinistas. They have "put Nicaragua back on the road to democracy, peace and reconciliation," he says. The *contras* should lay down their arms. Unlike the rebels in El Salvador, they aren't a "legitimate" political force. Even ex-Sandinista Edén Pastora, who won't toe the C.I.A. line by joining with retreads from the old Somoza regime, is out of bounds for Jackson. Pastora's legitimacy, he says, is a matter of "debate" in Nicaragua. Debate? I wonder what would happen to any poor devil in Nicaragua who publicly advocated Pastora's cause. Jail, no doubt. Then he'd be available to be freed when Jackson comes this way again.

FRED BARNES

Fred Barnes is national political reporter for *The Baltimore Sun*.

If it moves, sell it. Cheap.

GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY

UNCLE SAM has a railroad for sale, and it looks like whoever buys it is going to get one honey of a deal. The railroad is Conrail, the line that rose from the wreckage of the old Penn Central. The seller is the U.S. Department of Transportation, which is currently considering fifteen private bids. And the various prospective purchasers—some of whom helped run Conrail's precursors into the ground in the first place—don't have to kick any wheels or slam any freight-car doors to know if the deal is sweet. They just have to look at the numbers. The taxpayers have been kind enough to spend $7.6 billion to clean up Conrail's debts and upgrade the line. Conrail is profitable: last year it earned $313 million. It has nearly $700 million in cash in the bank. And it has tax write-offs worth over $1 billion. An attractive package. The probable price? Perhaps $500 million net, maybe a lot less. And why does the Reagan Administration want to do this? For the usual reason: it believes in free enterprise.

If Congress concurs, the abrupt privatization of Conrail will bring full circle a fifteen-year process of private default, public subsidy, and private enrichment. The bankruptcy of the Penn Central Company in 1970 reflected equal failures of private management and public policy. On one level, it was an epic debacle of modern managerial capitalism. For decades, the proprietors of the big eastern rail lines had failed to modernize, had let maintenance slide, and had diverted capital to real estate speculation. Poor management was camouflaged through consolidation and merger; expensive contracts and featherbedding substituted for effective labor relations. The terms "disinvestment" and "paper entrepreneurship" had not yet been coined, but the big railroads practiced them. In the endgame, just before bankruptcy, the Penn Central hid its true, deteriorated condition from the shareholding public

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only by borrowing large sums of money in order to keep paying dividends.

According to Congressional and S.E.C. investigations, the last days of the Penn Central were a hidden frenzy of insider dealing. In the months before the Penn Central's terminal condition became public knowledge, top executives and Penn Central's bankers dumped huge blocks of stock. Chase Manhattan alone unloaded more than half a million shares.

On another level, the downfall of free enterprise railroading signaled the collapse of a particular economic bargain between private ownership and public regulation, a bargain struck in 1887 with the creation of the Interstate Commerce Commission. But the I.C.C. was in the business of regulating rates and routes, not of long-range planning. In the 1950s the railroads came under increasing competitive pressure from buses and trucks traveling on subsidized interstate highways. Public policy was ostensibly agnostic on competition among different modes of transportation. But in practice, public policy, though inchoate, favored highway interests. Congress, reflecting the pressure of shippers and rail labor, insisted that the railroads keep unprofitable lines open, rates low, and wages high. Meanwhile the truckers got highway subsidies. The slow decline of the railroads was obvious to everyone, but there was no constituency for a long-term transportation policy.

During the five years of legal tangling over how to satisfy the railroads' creditors and at the same time keep an east coast rail system running, it became clear that nothing would suffice but a massive government bailout. So the United States, in what seemed the ultimate case of lemon socialism, nationalized the Penn Central and six other bankrupt railroads. The result was Conrail, possibly the most reluctant and ideologically unacknowledged nationalization in the history of the mixed economy.

That was in 1976. The government has since spent some $7.6 billion on Conrail—over $3 billion to pay off creditors, another nearly $3 billion on modernization, and several hundred million more to pension off some forty thousand redundant workers. Over a twelve-year period, the railroad system in the Northeast has been restructured and rationalized, not via public regulation but under public ownership. Surprisingly enough, public ownership in a deregulated competitive environment has proven far superior to the earlier social bargain of private ownership under obsessive government supervision.

Conrail today is one of America's most modern and best-managed railroads. It has been able to consolidate lines, streamline a bloated and inefficient labor force, and practice good management and aggressive marketing. It is expected to earn over $400 million in 1984. In the busy Northeast corridor, it is giving two private competitors, Norfolk Southern and CSX (the Chessie system), a run for their money.

THE REAGAN Administration finds this progress fiscally encouraging but ideologically unthinkable. Thus the fire sale. James Burnley, Deputy Transportation Secretary and a prime promoter of the sale, is one of the Administration's most determined free enterprisers. In 1981 the Reagan people insisted that Conrail be sold because it was losing money. Today they insist it be sold because it's making money.

Upon taking office in 1981, the Administration moved quickly to sell the railroad back to private enterprise, in bits and pieces if necessary. Conrail was then still operating in the red. The original Reagan plan, however, was blocked by Congress, which was committed to long-term modernization of the rail system. Compromise legislation enacted in June 1981 mandated further modernization, but agreed in principle that Conrail should eventually be sold. It got rid of Conrail's passenger commuter lines, streamlined staffing and work rules, and set criteria for eventually selling off the line either as a whole (if it became profitable) or in parts—subject, however, to a legislative veto.

BY THE END of 1981, Conrail was back in the black. A new management team, under L. Stanley Crane, formerly an executive with the highly regarded Southern Railroad, is widely credited with the turnaround. For the Administration, three profitable years for a public enterprise mean the hour has come to return it to the private sector—and price is no object.

Last April the Transportation Department set June 18 as a deadline for submitting bids to buy Conrail. But before other bids came in, officials received a pacesetting $1 billion bid from the Alleghany Corporation, a holding company which, ironically enough, was once a part owner of the Penn Central.

Alleghany is sitting on $800 million from the sale of its subsidiary, Investor Diversified Services, to the American Express Company. Ostensibly, Alleghany offered the government $1 billion. But according to an analysis conducted by the leading independent trade journal, *Traffic World*, and confirmed by the Democratic chairman of the House Commerce, Transportation, and Tourism Subcommittee, James Florio, Alleghany is actually proposing to buy Conrail substantially with Conrail's own money. In theory, Alleghany would pay the government $1 billion, but it would get back Conrail's own cash reserves and tax credits—with the result that Alleghany's true out-of-pocket cost would be only about $350-$500 million.

Conrail, incidentally, currently has total assets valued at $5-$6 billion, and *cash* reserves of $675 million. If the Alleghany deal goes through, this private investor will pick up a company in which the taxpayers have invested nearly $8 billion for the cost of about one year's operating profits. In stock market terms, that translates to a price-earnings ratio of about 1 to 1.

After Alleghany submitted its initial proposal last April, the Transportation Department sought advice from Goldman, Sachs, the investment banking house. Goldman, Sachs gave the department the answer it wanted to hear: it declared that the Alleghany offer was about right. When

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that became known, other bidders made their offers in the same $1 billion range. Therefore, even if Alleghany ultimately loses out, its bid has set the terms of the market, and the government is likely to sell off Conrail for substantially less than it's worth. Goldman, Sachs, now giving the government independent advice on the worth of Alleghany's offer, once handled transactions for Alleghany itself. In fact, Alleghany's president, John Burns, once worked for Goldman, Sachs for a period of six years. A further oddity is that Drew Lewis, the Reagan Administration's first Transportation Secretary and now head of Warner Amex, of which Alleghany is a large shareholder, has been lobbying Congress on behalf of the Alleghany deal. Lewis appointed five of the current Conrail board members.

Interestingly, too, when Penn Central was quietly going down the tubes, Alleghany was one of those insiders that dumped stock. Alleghany is largely a creature of the Kirby family, which previously had controlling interest in the old New York Central. After the Central was merged with the Pennsylvania Railroad to form Penn Central in 1968, the Kirbys and Alleghany together held about 2.5 percent of the total Penn Central stock, and there were five Alleghany directors on the twenty-two-member Penn Central board.

On May 27, 1970, Penn Central's board was informed that Penn Central's worsening financial condition made it impossible to sell $100 million worth of bonds. That publicly signaled that Penn Central was in deep trouble. But before that information was released on May 28, Alleghany and Investors Diversified Services dumped 212,000 shares of Penn Central stock.

Still another intriguing circumstance is Alleghany's eagerness to acquire Conrail as part of its long-term strategy to avoid S.E.C. regulation under the 1940 Investment Company Act, which limits self-dealing and restricts financial wheeling in several other respects. Because of its large cash holdings from the I.D.S. sale, Alleghany needs to find a major "operating company" to own by next January, or it will find itself subject to the 1940 act, which would also force Alleghany to sell its big interest in American Express. It is, of course, perfectly reasonable that Alleghany should want to buy Conrail as part of its regulatory strategy. But that is no reason for the government to select Alleghany as Conrail's most suitable buyer.

NOR ARE ANY of the other bidders necessarily preferable to Alleghany. They include three other railroads: the Norfolk Southern, CSX, and Timothy Mellon's Guilford Company, which controls three smaller eastern rail lines. On major stretches of the Northeast corridor there is vigorous three-way competition between Conrail, Norfolk Southern, and CSX. Each of the latter two lines has put in bids mainly to keep the other from getting Conrail. If either does get Conrail, the result would be consolidations and diminished competition.

Other serious bidders include CitiCorp, which proposes to parcel out pieces of the deal to other investors as yet unnamed (commercial banks playing investment banker is one of the latest fruits of bank deregulation); Allen & Company, a New York investment banking house, famous for its efforts to keep David Begelman at the helm of Columbia Pictures despite financial shenanigans; J. Willard Marriott Jr., the Republican restaurant and hotel magnate, in a joint venture with the Bass family, Texas oil men; and the Railway Labor Executives Association, representing Conrail's unionized workers, who already own 15 percent of the company under an employee stock ownership plan. To some extent, Conrail's present health is attributable to concessions made by the unions.

With the exception of the rail employees, every one of these prospective buyers seems attracted mainly by the prospect of taking over Conrail's paper tax losses and its ample cash, or by the chance to shut down a competitor, or by the possibility of a quick financial windfall—not by any long-term interest in running a railroad.

CONGRESS, taxpayers, rail employees, and business shippers who depend on rail service have endured twelve years of turmoil and expense in order to leave in place a durable, restructured rail system for the Northeast. The overriding policy need, therefore, is that the eventual private owner of Conrail be someone committed to running a railroad. Ironically, the more cheaply Conrail is sold, the more likely it is that the buyer will cannibalize its most profitable parts for a quick profit rather than operate the whole system for the long term. (In railroading jargon, this is known as "cherry-picking.") Nominally, the Administration is committed to maintaining a unified private Conrail system. But the rush to sell Conrail all but guarantees dismemberment.

What, then, to do with Conrail? A moderate solution, suggested last year by Goldman, Sachs but rejected by the Transportation Department, would be a public offering of Conrail stock. That would privatize Conrail, but allow the market to set its worth and keep it intact under its present competent management. There is another obvious solution. Conrail is doing a fine job as a public enterprise. Perhaps, at least for the immediate future, it should stay in the (shocking thought!) public sector. But that, of course, is unfortunately outside the current ideological consensus.

It speaks volumes about American capitalism that the government may be the most trustworthy entrepreneur to run a railroad. Trouble is, the government right now belongs to Ronald Reagan. And for Mr. Reagan it remains a contradiction in terms that the government can run something well—and if it does, that's just another reason to sell that something, fast. Even though the legislative veto as such has been struck down by the Supreme Court, Congress retains an effective veto over any Conrail sale because the tax complexities, if nothing else, require legislative clarification. Therefore it is up to Congress, not always a great exemplar of government efficiency, to save the government from itself.

BOB KUTTNER

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The message is bleak and the time is short.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE MONARCH

BY SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL

THE DEMOCRATIC convention started the day after the California primary, when Walter Mondale fell across the finish line the apparent but shaky victor. He retreated to North Oaks, Minnesota, to conduct the important business of the convention. By selecting a Vice President, he named himself the indisputable Presidential nominee. Almost everyone in the party and the press accepted his premise. A week after California, according to the Gallup poll, he was 9 points behind Ronald Reagan—within striking distance.

The North Oaks scenario had been written into Mondale's script years ago by James Johnson, his campaign chairman. It was his idea that Mondale should purchase a new house, secluded and yet near the Minneapolis airport, where the candidate would reestablish his roots after winning the primaries. At home Mondale would receive party luminaries and constituency groups. By demonstrating mastery of coalition-building in the post-primary period he would provide evidence of the superiority of his leadership. Now he had an open field; there was no opponent to hinder him. His slogan would be put to the test: "This President will know what he's doing."

Seven Vice Presidents appeared in turn on his driveway: three women, two blacks, two Texans (one Anglo, the other Hispanic). When Mondale interviewed Wilson Goode, the mayor of Philadelphia, who had held office for six months, the credibility and gravity of the procedure was cast into doubt. Mondale had brought the world of Washington to suburban Minnesota. In order to attract his attention, the constituencies began playing the game they believed Mondale had set up. They began demonstrating and speechmaking on the floor of the media convention. Judy Goldsmith, president of the National Organization of Women, declared that there would be a "thunderstorm" if Mondale didn't choose a woman. She threatened a convention floor fight; but what she threatened was what she was doing. Mondale raised feminists' expectations by delivering a speech at the NOW convention. Choosing a woman had been drained of its possibilities; its meaning had been inverted. A dreadful alchemy would make Mondale's gallantry into pandering. A moral decision had been transformed into one of spoils.

The press added a new element of volatility. Mondale had announced his goal to be party unity. Any discontent was therefore magnified, measuring the candidate against his own standard. 'SPECIAL INTEREST' QUESTION ARISES AS MONDALE SEEKS V.P., read the front-page headline in *The Boston Globe*. The lead editorial in *The Washington Post*, headlined MR. MONDALE'S PROBLEM, said that the candidate resembled "the great importuner rather than the great leader," trying to "appease every group," who "repeats too many hack phrases." He must "establish his independence." Columnist Mary McGrory decried Mondale's "failure of imagination."

By the end of June, according to the Gallup poll, Mondale was trailing Reagan by 19 points. During his sojourn at North Oaks he had dropped 10 points.

Before the polls disclosed Mondale's predicament, his managers believed the Vice Presidential exercise had been a success, mainly because it was being depicted nightly on television. They thought the message was: Mondale in control. When political operatives with close ties to the campaign urged that Mondale communicate a larger message than politicking, they were told to wait for the acceptance speech. The campaign is seen by its chief designers as a series of discrete events and tasks. Each building block would be put into place at the right time. If the candidate is behind, have patience. It's not the moment for the big message. After the convention, after more construction according to the blueprint, Mondale will stand taller. Mondale's senior advisers did not grasp that the symbolic ritual they had created was conveying a theme, and that the theme was: see the "special interests." Mondale lamented privately that the criticism was unfair. He was just trying to build a coalition—and isn't that what the Democratic Party is all about? On July 6, escorting interviewee Martha Layne Collins, governor of Kentucky for six months, down his driveway, Mondale said, "I don't know how else to proceed. . . ."

Ronald Reagan, however, demonstrated another method. Before a crowd of cheering auto workers, he unveiled who's running with him. "Remember when it was fashionable to claim that God is dead? Well, today I think we're seeing that He is alive and well in the hearts of our people." God, in fact, is the source of the recovery wrought by Reaganomics. "We're grateful to Him," said Reagan, "for the many blessings He has showered upon us." No "failure of imagination" here. Claiming the mandate of heaven is a divine right of Presidents.

Whereas Mondale campaigns as the leader of party and perhaps of government, Reagan runs as the leader of society. In Britain these functions are divided between the

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prime minister and the monarch. "Unfortunately," Mondale wrote in *The Accountability of Power*, "the world's greatest democracy has allowed the trappings of monarchy to overgrow the office originally intended to be a protection against monarchial rule." In that 1975 book Mondale argued for a regeneration of the party system. The parties, in his view, had been undermined by the imperial Presidency and the "electronic media." He proposed new party caucuses in Congress, a mixture of caucuses and primaries to winnow the Presidential possibilities, and a "Presidential leadership which continually recognizes the role of strengthening and consulting the party in the exercise of that leadership." He called this vision his "ideal."

Mondale was writing in the wake of Watergate and Richard Nixon's compulsive effort to quell his resentments against the universe with the ruffles and flourishes of a uniformed palace guard. Reagan serves as monarch without the Nixonian atmospherics. When Reagan greets Donald Duck's voice at the White House, as he did recently, on the fiftieth anniversary of Mr. Duck's debut, it's a meeting of equals. Both live in the Fantasyland of the American psyche, and thus are more popular and enduring than any party politician. Reagan implicitly comprehends this insight better than any recent occupant of the Presidential office. Mondale disagrees in principle with this reality, which places him at a disadvantage against his otherworldly-wise opponent. While Mondale gladly labors in the profane realm, Reagan reserves the sacred for himself.

In this contest, Reagan's stance has proved more sustainable against the third party in American politics, a party with its own hierarchy, conflicts, and ideology: the press. Reagan's armor hasn't yet been pierced by the press. Mondale, by contrast, has pitched his tent in the middle of its firing range. The press has now assumed the role Gary Hart played during the primaries—the constant critic of "politics as usual." How the press treats these candidates reveals as much about itself as it does about the politicians.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

In the mid-nineteenth century almost every American newspaper was affiliated with a political party; the press was an extension of the partisan culture. During the Progressive era, the press developed a new function, as an extra-constitutional check and balance. It saw its task as exposer of the gap between ethics and interests. The press began to regard itself as a force for objective truth above the interests and against the parties, at best institutions of partial truth. The new journalistic method was "realism," the accumulation of shocking unadorned facts, which by themselves establish a point of view. Just as muckraking challenged the parties, professionalism conflicted with the old partisanship. By the time of Watergate, investigative reporting had become completely professional, justified by its ideology of strict, objective empiricism. The press rose to new heights of influence, and its ancient antagonist, the parties, declined. In the vacuum have appeared politicians whose careers are elevated by means of images and ideas. The absolute expression of this new political culture is Ronald Reagan. The press, for its part, has become more central in a system that its own ideology—an ideology of piecemeal factual accumulation—prevents it from fully describing.

When confronted with Reagan, the orthodox method has been confounded. Reagan's politics aren't a composite of particulars. He starts with unalterable assumptions, from which he derives his facts. The press exposes the errors of his details, but is constrained by its orthodoxy from systematically interpreting Reagan's ideology, the most important thing about him.

With the economy soaring, thanks to the largest and most perverse Keynesian stimulus ever, Reagan can claim his supply-side doctrine is vindicated. His performance allows him to operate on any level he chooses. And he chooses to float beyond any conventional press construct. He refuses to enter into the pigeonhole of partisan figure, having campaigned since 1965 as a "citizen-politician." Like the press, he's against "politics as usual."

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The first artist to be elected President isn't diminished when the artifice is disclosed. Sometime soon a reporter will get his hands on the script for the Republican convention and excerpts will be printed in the newspapers. The exposure of the script, however, will not damage Reagan. Most of what he's said and done since January 20, 1981, has been scripted. The point is that his script has enabled him to outmaneuver his opponents, including the third party. Reagan can afford to ignore the tests the press poses for him. Instead, he creates new *tableaux vivants* in which there are no tests. He can fail on his own terms only if the scenery falls on him.

Reagan's range is both higher and lower than Mondale's. Right now he's perceived as the triumphal head of state. But he's also the leader of the conservative faction that's seized control of the Republican Party. If the election is posed as a race between partisanship and monarchy, the monarch will win. But if it's a party versus a faction, the party has a larger moral claim. Fortunately for Mondale, when the roles of monarch and factional chieftain clash, Reagan usually chooses faction. His Achilles heel is exposed when his loyalty to the conservative movement overrides the Presidential image. That's when the scenery falls on him. On July 3, for example, he held a peacemaking luncheon for environmental leaders at the White House—an apparently fail-safe tableau. But the environmentalists were outraged by the appointment the day before of Anne Gorsuch Burford, the discredited and ousted head of the Environmental Protection Agency, to the National Advisory Committee on Oceans and Atmosphere. The President's patronage of a movement cadre, in spite of her previous indiscretions, tarnished his shiny crown, at least for a day.

Reagan's factional commitment has long been a potential political liability of intense concern to his handlers. It was the very weakness that his campaign had to mask in the 1980 election. Since September 1980 he has been surrounded by an extensive apparatus set up to protect him from his "gaffes." What's generally not appreciated is that these so-called mistakes are almost always flashes of Reagan's heartfelt beliefs, emblems of his factional identity.

Reagan understands that the press must report the story that's presented to it. So the press has been presented with Reagan the king and denied access to Reagan the factionalist. If Mondale wants the latter story told, then he must tell it. The press will have no choice but to report what he says.

MEANWHILE, Reagan campaigns as monarch. "Gentlemen, start your engines!" he declared regally from Air Force One through the loudspeakers at the Firecracker 400 stock-car race in Daytona, Florida, on the Fourth of July. *Roar*! saluted all the machines and people.

In Mondale, the press finds what it has been denied by Reagan. Mondale is openly attempting to put together a classic political party. Whenever a squeaky wheel demands more grease, the incident can be flatly reported in the revelatory mode. The press maintains its objectivity while telling a story with a moral—a moral about the partisan and the "special interests." The intrinsic merits of the policies of these interests have been nearly irrelevant in the media judgments made so far about Mondale. What has been crucial is his inability to lift himself above the interests; his actions are always reported as the reflection of material forces. Throughout the primaries, Mondale refused to believe that "special interests" was a real issue. How could it be wrong to demonstrate loyalty to groups that had demonstrated loyalty to him? His defense confirms for the press that he is nothing more than a party politician, someone without a mystique. For political journalists—unable to report on even genuine conflicts of ideas except as clashes between personalities or constituencies—Mondale is a congenial subject. "What you see is what you get," he's boasted. When Reagan is Reagan, the hounds of the press are thwarted. But when Mondale is Mondale the pack always catches the scent.

CURIOUSLY, Mondale tried to establish himself in the post-primary period by repeating the Vice Presidential search scenario of that extra-partisan politician, Jimmy Carter. Mondale replayed Carter's novel process as though it were a tradition that must be upheld. He evoked Carter but didn't resemble him. In his own pre-convention period in 1976, Carter struck deep organ notes. And he was beyond the familiar categories favored by the press. In Plains he didn't seem besieged; the prospective Vice Presidents he summoned to his exotic yet representative small town seemed to be seeking him out. At the 1976 convention, Carter stood before the delegates as a religious white Southerner who had learned from the civil rights movement and would apply its lessons of healing to the post-Vietnam, post-Watergate nation. He appeared larger than the coalition supporting him. The coalition seemed to be a natural coming together, moved by the spirit. It didn't seem the result of a deal that had been hammered out. Thus the convention unfolded as a liturgical epiphany of the Democracy, concluding with a benediction by Martin Luther King Sr. and the singing of "We Shall Overcome" as tears misted the eyes of even the most hardened reporters. The power of this incantatory moment has been unmatched at a Democratic convention. Amazing grace indeed. It left Carter with a gigantic lead, a lead of more than 30 points. And even though he squandered nearly all of it, it was just enough to carry him into the Oval Office. Mondale must hope he will gain in the polls what Carter lost.

Reagan is forcing the pace of the campaign by slowing it down. With a lower pace, less can happen; his lead can remain unsurmountable. The subliminal message is that everything is going splendidly. Disturbing the calm he's created is inappropriate behavior. "We don't have to be engaged in the hectic, rapid, almost frantic struggle for the nomination," says James Lake, communications director of the Reagan-Bush Committee. "We maintain our Presidential character. And Mondale solidifies the perception that he panders to special interests."

Tick-tock, tick-tock. Mondale needs a new story, fast. □

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Of villainous bosses, Antimasonics, smoke-filled rooms, and feckless VPs.

BRAWLY CONFABULATIONS

BY NICHOLAS VON HOFFMAN

IF YOU FIND yourself snapping off your television set in exasperation at the tedious inanities of the Democrats in San Francisco, blame William Morgan. For it was Mr. Morgan who caused the national Presidential nominating convention to come into existence.

He did it by getting murdered in the year 1829. Or at least it was believed that he was murdered. He certainly was kidnapped, and he never turned up again. Before his disappearance he had completed work on a book describing the secret rites and rituals of the order of the Free and Accepted Masons, and the Masons were blamed for the crime. An Antimasonic Party was formed, which included not only the normal hysterics and crazy persons but also bold and calculating types less interested in the suppression of Freemasonry than in finding a political vehicle sturdy enough to carry them into the history books. It was they who arranged a meeting in Baltimore on September 26, 1831, at which one William Wirt was picked to run for the Presidency. In his letter of acceptance, this first nominee of a national party convention set the tone for the century and a half to come by repudiating his party's platform.

Thus was born the grandest show in our political culture. Ah, the music and the bunting, the spread-eagle orator, the man who gave the nominating speech, the dark horse and his stablemate, the stalking horse, the roll call of the states and the delegation chairman rising to bellow, "I have the great honor and high privilege to inform you, Madame Clerk, that the great state of Florida, the southernmost of the forty-eight, casts eighteen sunshine and orange votes for a magnificent statesman." Where else but at an American national nominating convention would the gentleman rise, as did Governor Elbert Lee Trinkle of Virginia, to say of his candidate that "no one could point a finger of scorn at him except with pride"? But that was 1924, when the Democrats stayed in their hall through seventeen days and 104 ballots. Patriotism and snake oil, the Chamber of Commerce, Chautauqua, and the revival tent: the pit where young heroes and old bosses made pageantry and drama.

So strong in memory and nostalgia are the reverberations from the Wigwam in Chicago, the first Madison Square Garden in New York, and all the other vanished coliseums and armories of conventions gone by that no reporter and no politician feels initiated into his vocation until he has attended one. So they are coming to San Francisco, victims of a resolute romanticism which denies that the age of the national political convention, like that of the Pullman car which carried the delegates to so many of these meetings, is past.

The identity of the nominee has usually been so much of a foregone conclusion that in the last fifty years the Democrats have named their man on the first ballot every time except once, thirty-two years ago. In the same time span the Republicans have gone to a second ballot twice, the most recent occasion being thirty-six years ago. Thus almost half the voting-age population was not yet born the last time there was a closely contested national nominating convention.

Americans have a weakness for large, brawly confabulations where you get to wear lapel badges and punch somebody in the snoot. (In the decades of its desuetude the convention has become an orderly affair, but in the time of its apogee, 1860-1932, the delegates enjoyed biffing each other.) Moreover, by the 1930s the old way of choosing nominees by a haphazard Congressional caucus was falling apart. The caucus's authority wasn't accepted back in Boondockia, and the very idea of Presidents being picked by the lace-shirted gentlemen of Washington, a necessity in the era of stagecoach and barge, was increasingly resented as railroad and steamboat made it quick and easy for Americans to convoke and convene themselves in bigger and bigger assemblies of loud and diverse purpose.

The dramatic flabbiness of San Francisco is due to the absence of the traditional villain of yore, the political boss. The special-interest groups alleged to control Walter Mondale are constructs invented by debaters and polemicists. They cannot compare with the three-dimensional Charlie Murphy, the Grand Sachem of Tammany Hall, seated next to his two millionaire buddies, Thomas Fortune Ryan and August Belmont, at the 1912 Democratic convention in Baltimore. Imagine the uproar as William Jennings Bryan, who knew how to work a convention, forced his way to the platform to move a resolution declaring the convention "opposed to the nomination of any candidate for President who is the representative of or under obligation to J. Pierpont Morgan, Thomas F. Ryan, August Belmont, or any other member of the privilege-hunting and favor-seeking class." As the voting began, Murphy, who knew

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enough not to go on record in favor of plutocracy, leaned over to his pal Belmont and said, "Now, Augie, listen and hear yourself voted out of the convention."

The 1912 convention was the last the Great Commoner would dominate, which he did by destroying over the course of eight days and forty-six ballots the candidacy of Missouri's Champ Clark, the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Clark, who was one railroad stop away down in Washington, was so enraged by the telephoned reports of what Bryan was doing to him that he hopped a late-night choo-choo and arrived at two o'clock in the morning at the Emerson Hotel with a gun in his pocket, at which point one of his campaign managers ran through the corridors yelling, "Champ Clark is here to kill Bill Bryan!" You'll never see Gary Hart take direct action like that.

The most famous of all bossed conventions was the Republican get-together in Chicago in 1920. This was the convention which gave the American language the expression "the smoke-filled room." Room 404 and adjacent rooms at the Blackstone Hotel had been rented by Will Hays, the chairman of the Republican National Committee. Legend has it that to these rooms a cabal of bosses summoned Warren G. Harding at three o'clock in the morning, when only poker players and connivers are awake, to ask him if he knew of any reason he should not be President of the United States.

THE LEGEND of the Smoke-Filled Room (which some serious historians who ought to have known better have helped propagate) got an ex post facto lift when people dug out an earlier *New York Times* quote from Harding's campaign manager: "I don't expect Senator Harding to be nominated on the first, second, or third ballot, but I think we can well afford to take chances that about eleven minutes after two on Friday morning at the convention, when fifteen or twenty men, somewhat weary, are sitting around a table, some one of them will say: 'Who will we nominate?' At that decisive time the friends of Senator Harding can suggest him and can afford to abide by the result."

So the myth grew, though Senator James Wadsworth Jr. of New York, one of the men in Room 404, said afterward that the steel-nerved bosses "were like a lot of chickens with their heads cut off." In fact the men of the Smoke-Filled Room did not break the deadlocked convention by throwing their delegations to Harding. Harding won because he had quietly made himself everybody's second-choice candidate. As he later put it, "We drew to a pair of deuces and filled."

If that's the way Harding saw it, the Chicago powwow, to use a word favored by newspaper writers of the time, was gratifyingly awful in the view of those who needed to dose themselves with indignation. "I have never seen a convention—and I have watched most of them since McKinley's first nomination—so completely dominated by sinister predatory economic forces as was this," wrote William Allen White. "It was controlled by a national committee representing plutocracy and United States Senators, the political representatives of what Theodore Roosevelt had called amalgamated wealth."

BUT IT WAS more than money that drove some bosses. Roscoe Conkling, the red-headed madman who ran New York State Republican politics in the post-Civil War period, nearly destroyed his party in an attempt to get U.S. Grant a third-term nomination in 1880. Roscoe went down with his famous "306" delegates, "The Stalwarts" of unbreakable loyalty to their old, discredited, out-of-office President. A bossier boss there never was.

Rutherford B. Hayes, the retiring President, lamented that "Grant, our first soldier and a man of many sterling qualities, should be so humiliated and degraded as he has been by his unprincipled supporters." But Conkling, who was as close as you were going to get to being *capo di tuti Republicani*, could have supported another candidate, gotten him nominated, and gotten himself anything he wanted. He wouldn't do it, though, and instead a handsome, young, scholarly, and once much admired dark horse, the now unremembered James A. Garfield, was selected by an exhausted and confused assemblage.

After Conkling was bested, Garfield's managers decided they would have to placate the New York boss; national elections were so close in that era that a Republican could not win without carrying this large and difficult state. That's why they wanted to nominate Levi P. Morton, a highly regarded New Yorker, for the Vice Presidency; but Morton wouldn't take it without Conkling's blessing, and Roscoe was still too angry to confer it. (Morton would be elected Vice President eight years later on the ticket with Benjamin Harrison.) In a quandary the convention nominated another New Yorker, a true underling in the Conkling organization, who had never held a post in government higher than collector of the Port of New York. A year later Garfield was dead, and people were clapping their palms to their heads and exclaiming, "Oh my God! Chet Arthur in the White House!"

Off in a corner of Madison Square Park there is a seated statue of Chester A. Arthur, about whom it could be said what Horace Greeley said of Schuyler Colfax, another unremembered Vice President: "He has always surprised people in every position he has obtained by doing better than they expected." Chet sits in his chair in his little corner of New York, the same fashion plate in bronze he was in life, perhaps meditating on the Vice Presidential office.

In the light of our debates over the qualifications for the No. 2 spot, Chet may be thinking about Richard Johnson, the genial Kentucky tavern keeper who served as Martin Van Buren's Vice President. In 1840 the salacious tidbit concerned Johnson's supplementing his income by running a roadhouse. Former President Andrew Jackson, Van Buren's sponsor, demanded that Rumpsy-Dumpsy, as the Vice President was sometimes called, be dumped from the reelection ticket, after Johnson's customers began writing letters like this one: "The old gentleman seems to enjoy

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the business of Tavern Keeping as well as any host I have ever stopped with, and is as bustling a landlord as the fastidious traveller could wish. . . . It is affirmed that . . . [he] devotes too much of his time to a young Delilah of about the complexion of Shakespeare's swarthy Othello. . . . How can he expect friends to countenance and sustain him when he openly and shamefully lives in adultery with a buxom young *negro*?"

Rumpsy Dumpsy's opposite number that year, John Tyler, was said (by his numerous enemies, at any rate) to have gotten on the ticket because he wept so loud, so long, and so publicly at the delegates' refusal to nominate Henry Clay. Clay, laboring under the disadvantage of being forceful and specific in his program, was passed over in favor of William Henry Harrison who had no program at all. That's what the convention wanted: a man of no known or fixed principles. And to go along with him, it omitted voting a platform. Every man holding the franchise could imagine anything he wanted of this feckless ticket. Naturally it was elected, and a month after it was sworn into office, Harrison died and Vice President Tyler succeeded to the Presidency to conduct an Administration so disastrous that before it was over every member of his cabinet had quit in protest.

WHEN YOU reflect on some of the unutterable bums who have been nominated for the Vice Presidency, the present scrutinizing of the qualifications of the women interested in the office is unprecedented. In 1904 the Democrats nominated 81-year-old Henry Gassaway Davis, a man who boasted he had never read a novel because "the people in the stories are not real."

Theodore Roosevelt got the nod because William McKinley was afraid that White House interference in the 1900 Republican convention might prejudice his own chances of reelection. Neutrality on high gave Tom Platt, the Republican boss of New York State, the chance to push the uncontrollable Teddy out of the governor's chair into an early political grave, snoozing away the life of the living dead as presiding officer of the United States Senate. There was great popular support for the young Spanish-American War hero, except from Mark Hanna, McKinley's campaign manager. As the stampede for Roosevelt developed, an angry Hanna was stopped in mid-flight across a hotel lobby, and was asked what was the matter. "Matter?" he is reported to have said. "Why, everybody here has gone crazy. What is the matter with all of you? Don't any of you realize that there is only one life between that madman and the Presidency? Platt and Quay [the boss of Pennsylvania] are no better than idiots. What can he do as Governor of New York compared to the damage he will do as President if McKinley should die?"

Although great men have held the Vice Presidency—notably John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and Theodore Roosevelt—there has been only one great Vice President: Thomas Riley Marshall of Indiana. He got the job because Tom Taggart, his home-state boss, switched his delegation and put Woodrow Wilson over the top. It was Marshall who told America, "What this country needs is a good five-cent cigar," and it was Marshall who was happy to spend his eight years in office traveling hither and yon on Pullman cars to tell yarns. He once sent Wilson a book, inscribing it as coming from "your only vice." He never wanted to be President, but he did love to tell stories. He said that in his early days as a lawyer he made a living settling suits for battery on the Indiana frontier: "For a long while I eked out a precarious existence with these assault-and-battery cases. . . . Scarcely had we reached the point where these fights ceased, and it looked as though I might be compelled to seek some other calling than the law, when the railroads began to cut off arms and legs and opened up a new source of revenue. There is hardly a good lawyer of the ancient days of northern Indiana who did not build himself an atrocious trick house out of the contingent fees prosecuted against railroad companies for mutilating and killing our citizens."

ALTHOUGH conventions are intensely political gatherings, they often turn to nonpartisan figures to nominate. Grant had been a Democrat before the Republicans got him; in 1920 the Democrats wanted to nominate the hero of the hour, who was—would you believe it?—Herbert Hoover. And in 1948 the party's leaders thought so little of Harry Truman that a coalition of Hubert Humphrey, Strom Thurmond (then a Democrat), Jake Arvey (the boss of the Chicago machine), then-Senator Claude Pepper, and Americans for Democratic Action tried to draft Dwight Eisenhower, then president of Columbia University. A.D.A. members picketed Ike's home with signs reading, IKE, YOU FAVOR THE DRAFT, WE FAVOR IT FOR YOU. Senator Pepper said, "The Democrats must be prepared to let General Eisenhower be a purely national President. He could not be expected to accept the nomination if it narrowed him the limits of a party candidate. The Democratic Party's reward would lie in the tributes it would gain for its magnanimity in time of crisis."

In the modern era the only bosses conventions have had are incumbent Presidents of their own party. The Democrats nominated Truman, and four years later Truman made an equally unhappy convention take Adlai Stevenson, a man who had not made one speech on behalf of his candidacy, as its nominee. In 1968, after the primary front-runner, Robert Kennedy, was murdered, Lyndon Johnson made the convention nominate Hubert Humphrey, who had stayed out of most of the preliminary bouts. And in 1980 Jimmy Carter obliged the delegates to nominate Jimmy Carter. At that convention all the action was at the cocktail parties. The parties may be more exciting than the party in San Francisco, too—how can it be otherwise with the predominance of the primary? You can't put millions of people through the pain of a primary season and then double-cross them by selecting someone they did not vote for. But no matter how we choose our candidate, H. L. Mencken is still right: "The saddest life is that of a political aspirant under democracy. His failure is ignominious and his success is disgraceful." □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Swann Song

The advance word on *Swann in Love* has been bad, and, for once, the advance word turns out to be true. Still, the wrong person is made the culprit. Blame has been heaped on Volker Schlöndorff, the German director of this French film, and certainly Schlöndorff has done no better than one would expect from the earnest, pedestrian director of *The Tin Drum* and *Coup de Grâce*. But the real clod of the affair, the bungler and butcher, was the author of the screenplay, Peter Brook.

Swann in Love
(Orion Classics)

Originally Brook had agreed both to write and direct his adaptation of Proust, but after he had finished the screenplay, he opted to move on. No wonder. His screenplay concentrates on the *Swann in Love* section as a way to solve the problem of transferring the seven-volume work to film; further, Brook condensed the action of that small section to twenty-four hours, plus a brief epilogue with the dying Swann. (Schlöndorff, with the help of others, subsequently altered Brook's script "slightly.") Brook says that "all Proust's obsessions" are in the *Swann in Love* section. If you can survive the word "obsessions," Brook goes on to say, "I wanted to prove that in a single day it's possible to reflect eternity." A brilliant percept. Pity that James Joyce never thought to prove it. Pity, too, that Proust had an utterly different view of the function of time in his novel. Brook's screenplay, from a man who wants, but only doubtfully deserves, status as a premier theater/film artist, is Filmland hackwork at its most facile and insensitive. The recent screen versions of Malamud's *The Natural* and Lowry's *Under the Volcano*, with all their liberties and defects, are comparative triumphs of imaginative transformation.

I write out of strong prejudice. First, Brook's statements seem to me self-exculpatory hogwash: no section of Proust's gigantic work can represent all of his "obsessions." Second, Harold Pinter recognized this truth, and in his superb screen adaptation, tried "to distill the whole work, to incorporate the major themes of the book into an integrated whole." The Pinter screenplay has been published (I reviewed it in TNR, December 24 & 31, 1977); Roger Shattuck, no mean Proustian, wrote of it: "It enlarges the language of film in order to encompass one of the most sustained products of the human imagination." But Nicole Stéphane, the producer who commissioned the Pinter screenplay, despaired of raising the money to film it—it was published so that it wouldn't be completely lost—and at last she persuaded Brook to take on a version for which financing could be found. With all (or some) respect for Stéphane's "obsessions" to get Proust on screen in some shape or other, I think the decision was ludicrous. The story of Swann and Odette is, as such, banal—a cultivated man enslaved by an intellectually and morally inferior beauty. Much of the episode's weight in the novel comes from the fact that it takes place in the "past": we already know a good deal about the young Marcel and something about Gilberte, the daughter of Swann and Odette. Therefore the Swann-Odette story is exponential to the whole work's central subject, the weavings of time. Pinter, whatever the flaws in his transmutation (Shattuck has noted them), understood the central subject and was not to be dissuaded by pressures of expediency, not even when lacquered with Brookian rhetoric. Brook, however, a high priest of high art, was quite willing to snip out and restitch some bits of one line of an immense counterpoint, before moving on to matters loftier than Proust. Schlöndorff can be chided for accepting the Brook version and for his own executant limits; but the basic barbarity was committed by Brook.

Yes, the costumes are sumptuous, but that's no rare achievement. Good designers are not rare, and this one—Yvonne Sassinot de Nesle—surely is gifted. (The clothes were made by Umberto Tirelli, who had been tapped for the job twenty years ago when Visconti was mulling his own Proust project.) The settings are by Jacques Saulnier, whom I've admired ever since Chabrol's *Landru*. Sven Nykvist was the cinematographer, so all is well in that department. A more sympathetic composer than Hans-Werner Henze could have been found; and it was certainly a mistake to let us hear Henze's idea of "the little phrase by Vinteuil which was, so to speak, the national anthem of [Swann's and Odette's] love." This is a clear instance where unheard melodies are sweeter.

But if these elements had all been better than they are, they couldn't compensate for the acting any more than for the script. Jeremy Irons cannot play Swann. Not only does he lack Swann's "aquiline nose" or any suggestion of the Jewishness that makes Swann's presence in high society continually extraordinary, he lacks the elegance that Swann must easily embody. Irons had touches of romantic sweep in the his-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

After the Rehearsal. A unique and absorbing meditation on theater and film by a master theater and film director, Ingmar Bergman. (Reviewed 6/25/84)

Another Country. Exceptionally well-made English film about the public school genesis of Burgess-McLean types. Script lacks a major synapse, but acting is first class. (7/9/84)

The Natural. Robert Redford uses Bernard Malamud's baseball novel as he pleases, but the results are mostly pleasant. (6/11/84)

Under the Volcano. Not much of Malcolm Lowry's texture but a lot of Albert Finney's and Jacqueline Bisset's extraordinary acting. Occasional glimpses of the interior hell where the novel resides. (6/18/84)

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torical sections of *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, but here he is just an English actor over from London to do a film. The soundtrack compounds the trouble, with what can only be called dementia. In France Swann's lines were dubbed by a French actor. In the U.S. version Irons speaks Swann's lines after a three-month Berlitz course in French. You don't need to know any more French than I (a modest requirement) to hear Irons's bad accent and to wonder why it provokes no comment from Swann's Parisian friends. Irons is hardly so famous a film star in this country that another, similar voice would have been unacceptable. The present effect is mad.

Ornella Muti, the Odette, *is* dubbed, but so clumsily that we're constantly aware of it. She is wrongly cast, anyway. "Her profile was too sharp, her skin too delicate, her cheekbones were too prominent, her features too tightly drawn" does not describe Muti's rounded, doughy face. She seems ostentatiously vulgar from the start.
tiously vulgar from the start.

Michel Piccoli was first talked of for Charlus, then Michael Lonsdale. As it comes out, the wicked baron is played by Alain Delon, a performance that has been hailed by some as the film's saving grace. But the film is not saved, and Delon has no grace. He does well enough with the satanic leers of the cruising pederast, but he is not remotely an archetypal dandy. There is more of Charlus in Boldini's portrait of the Comte de Montesquiou, one of Proust's models for the character and also the model for Delon's makeup, than in all that the actor does.

Swann in Love falls with repellent neatness between two stools. Those who know the novel can only be irritated by the film; those who don't know the novel will see only a tedious film. But this picture makes two matters crystalline. Peter Brook's screenplay is in every way reprehensible. Pinter's screenplay will now certainly not be filmed. This last is one of the grievous cultural sins of our age.

Department of Bitter Coincidence. As this is written, news comes of Joseph Losey's death. It was through Losey, who had been approached by Nicole Stéphane, that Pinter took on the writing of the screenplay; and as Pinter says in his introduction, he was advised all along by Losey—together with the Proustian authority, Barbara Bray. (The published script is dedicated to them.) Losey was of course meant to direct the film. I was not by any means a consistent admirer of Losey's work, but this script would have brought out the considerable best in him. It's grimly apt that he should die just as the *Swann in Love* abortion appears and finishes off the Pinter screenplay forever.

CONSCIENCE AND CATASTROPHE

The Quality of Mercy: Cambodia, Holocaust, and Modern Conscience by William Shawcross

(Simon and Schuster, 464 pp, $19.95)

Great human disasters, natural or man-made, put bureaucrats to a test not only as public officials but as human beings. Normally insulated from the consequences of their actions by layers of government, and accustomed to the abstractions of statecraft, they suddenly are forced to deal with a problem in which every action (or inaction) can have an immediate effect on whether people will live or die. In an effort to examine in detail the reaction to catastrophe, William Shawcross has written *The Quality of Mercy*, a study of the response to the Cambodian food and refugee crisis since 1975. His new book lacks the clear focus of his ground breaking *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon, and the Destruction of Cambodia*, but it does raise issues of the greatest importance in a century in which refugees have become a permanent part of our political landscape.

I must begin by declaring an interest. Having served as Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs during much of the period he covers, I cannot pretend to objectivity in think-

"Long ago I proposed that unsuccessful candidates for the Presidency be quietly hanged, as a matter of public sanitation and decorum. The sight of their grief must have a very evil effect upon the young."

Imagine the uproar if any newspaperman wrote that today: the serious reports on news bulletins; the calls for journalistic responsibility; the protests from opponents of capital punishment. As an antidote to present political solemnities, nothing could be better than reading such gems as the above from H.L. Mencken's A CARNIVAL OF BUNCOMBE. For pre- and post-convention relief, savor the funny and unkind words he hurled at Presidents, would-be Presidents, voters, conventions, bigots, bishops, and other irritants.

"Has the great art and mystery of politics no apparent utility?" he asked. "Does it appear to be unqualifiedly ratty, raffish, sordid, obscene and low down, and its salient virtuosi a gang of unmitigated scoundrels? Then let us not forget its high capacity to soothe and tickle the midriff, its incomparable services as a maker of entertainment."

A Carnival of Buncombe
Writings on Politics
H.L. MENCKEN
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ing about Shawcross's book. I was deeply involved in the events he discusses and, although Shawcross did not interview me, I am mentioned frequently and generally not unfavorably.

LIKE Shawcross, I have long been fascinated by a striking difference between disaster relief and the normal agenda of nations. The routine of government meetings never seems more unreal than when their consequences are so real—literally life or death—for people who have no spokesman present in the room. One such meeting that remains vividly in my mind took place in the White House Situation Room early in 1979. The South China Sea was filled with tens of thousands of Vietnamese refugees, many in ramshackle boats, seeking sanctuary in neighboring countries. Large numbers of them drowned, and others were attacked by pirates. There were ships of the U.S. Seventh Fleet in the Western Pacific, but not where the boat people were in greatest difficulty. At the time, the Navy was following traditional rules of the sea: picking up refugees sighted during regular naval patrols only if they appeared to be in imminent danger. No extraordinary rescue efforts were being made.

The question arose: Should the Seventh Fleet be instructed to make the rescue of refugees fleeing Vietnam, in effect, an additional assigned mission? There was serious division within the U.S. government. The Navy was concerned about the diversion of ships from their primary naval mission. Moreover, some countries in the area, in violation of long-standing rules of the sea, would not let ships unload refugees. What destination, then, for those picked up by the Seventh Fleet? Would the Navy bring them directly to the United States, allowing them to "jump the line" and enter the United States months, or even years, ahead of others already waiting in the swollen camps of Southeast Asia? Some, including at least one staff member of the National Security Council (not Zbigniew Brzezinski), opposed doing anything that might "generate" refugees. They argued that once the news reached Vietnam that the Seventh Fleet was rescuing refugees off the Indochinese coast, many more people would set out to sea in ever more dangerous small boats. This would not only create more refugees, they argued, but would also remove from Vietnam many people who, if forced to remain inside Vietnam, might cause the Communists serious internal problems.

Most of the points raised against the use of the Seventh Fleet had some validity. But as Washington argued, people continued to drown. Finally the issue made its way to a high-level meeting chaired by Vice President Mondale. Sitting at the head of the long table in the windowless, sterile atmosphere of the Situation Room, as far from the stormy waters of the South China Sea as could be imagined, we debated the issue, at times as though it was just another abstract interagency dispute. Mondale patiently listened to every argument for almost two hours. At the end of it all, he cut through the legalisms and the complications. He could not imagine, he said, being part of an Administration which did not ask its ships to try to rescue innocent people fleeing an oppressive regime. He wanted the orders to the Seventh Fleet amended in order to save lives.

At this time and distance it may be hard to conceive that the decision, so clearly right, was almost not made. There are people who are alive today because of Mondale's decision; of very few actions by a government official can such a thing be said.

I DESCRIBE this incident at length before turning to William Shawcross's book because it illustrates several things about the way governments and bureaucrats approach such life and death issues. Many of the people involved in the debate over the use of the Seventh Fleet regarded it as just another bureaucratic problem. Hannah Arendt's memorable idea about the "banality of evil" showed how efficient Nazi bureaucrats could mobilize the German government to carry out a policy of mass slaughter. Perhaps here (on a wholly different scale, to be sure) we were seeing the evil of banality: functionaries engaged in the most routine sort of internal bureaucratic disputes while people in some remote corner of the globe die, or fester in refugee camps.

Shawcross traces the way perceptions of the Cambodia problem evolved in the West. One of his most provocative conclusions concerns the way in which "Cambodia, in the fall of 1979, after long years of disaster, [achieved] critical mass in Western conscience." This happened, he feels, in large part because of " "the constant evocation of 'the Holocaust' . . . [which] was surely crucial to the way in which the disaster assumed such international emotional force." Shawcross agrees, of course, that Cambodia deserved "great attention." But he objects to the comparison with Hitler's war against the Jews as "coarsening" and "unfortunate." He observes correctly the critical historical differences between, say, Auschwitz and Pol Pot's torture chambers at Tuol Sleng, which were reserved primarily for the lapsed cadre of their own fanatical movement. Still, the differences between the Holocaust and Cambodia notwithstanding, the evocation of the memory was important in rallying worldwide support for a relief effort that saved large numbers of lives.

SHAWCROSS makes a more telling point when he observes that the disasters "which do attract our attention are by no means always the most destructive." He cites Jim Grant of UNICEF, who has warned that "loud emergencies [like Cambodia] can drown out the continuous 'quiet emergencies' like the death of at least ten million children every year" from malnutrition. Grant's distinction is valid, but it should not be misunderstood as suggesting that money for one disaster can be reallocated easily to another. If only such a Benthamite calculus could be applied to the vast underclass of desperate peoples throughout the world, and relief funds distributed in strict accordance with need! Unfortunately the world does not work that way. For a variety of reasons, certain catastrophes will always elicit greater sympathy than others. Some people got more emotional over the killing of baby seals, for example, than the starvation of children in Angola. And public attention, always inconsistent, is a major factor. From a single memorable photograph, or one reporter in the right place at the right time, vast consequences may proceed. Conversely, no publicity in the West probably means no relief assistance from the West. Shawcross may lament this unfairness as much as the rest of us, but he offers no solution. As he surely knows, there is none.

At the end of 1978, at almost exactly the same time as the United States normalized diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China, Vietnam invaded Cambodia, driving Pol Pot's forces into the remote western areas of

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the country but not destroying them completely (as American intelligence had predicted). This Vietnamese failure to wipe out the forces of their Peking-backed foe was to have enormous consequences.

At about the same time, the world became acquainted with the boat people. As their numbers grew, evidence also mounted that the refugee flood was being cynically encouraged by the Vietnamese as a way of ridding themselves of an undesired element in their own society, particularly the ethnic Chinese, and throwing the burden for their relief onto the West. In June 1979 Jimmy Carter used Presidential authority to allow 168,000 Indochinese refugees (not just boat people but also Laotians and Cambodians) into the United States annually for an indefinite period of time. Armed with this remarkable act of American generosity, the United States successfully lobbied other nations to join in a worldwide resettlement effort of refugees from the overflowing refugee camps in Southeast Asia. Shawcross barely mentions Carter's courageous decision, and seems either uninterested or unaware of the difficulties and the drama surrounding it. To be sure, the focus of his book is Cambodia, but the Vietnamese refugee problem and the Cambodian relief efforts always had to be dealt with together, and Carter's leadership was vital in mobilizing American and international efforts.

THE NEXT stage of the Cambodian tragedy then erupted. In the fall of 1979 the Vietnamese Army pushed the remnants of Pol Pot's forces to and across the Thai border. With the armies came an extraordinary collection of starving refugees, deserters, and wounded. No one will ever know how many people reached the border and how many died trying. At the time Washington received reports that perhaps as many as one million people were on their way to Thailand in desperate need of food and medical help. The Thais, quite understandably, panicked. Cambodia no longer existed as a buffer state between Thailand and Vietnam. The powerful Vietnamese Army was now on the Thai border, only four hours by road from Bangkok.

In *Sideshow*, Shawcross told the story primarily from the point of view of Washington-based policymakers. Here he tries a much more difficult approach, switching vantage point fre-

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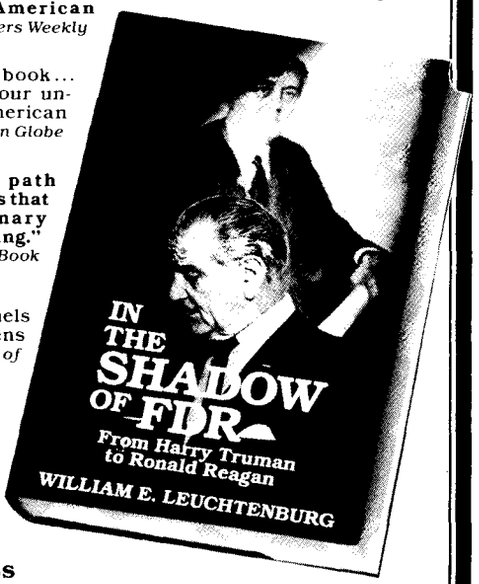

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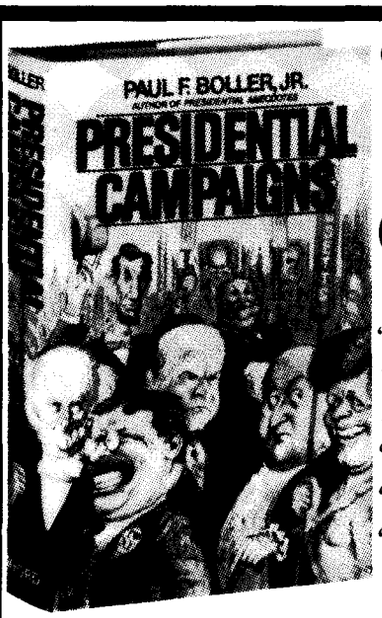

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quently from Geneva to Bangkok to Washington or New York, then taking the reader inside Cambodia for personal reportage. The story is often confusing, filled with the acronyms of the specialized agencies at the U.N., an enormous multinational cast of characters, and an intricate political situation. Shawcross is at his best describing his own trips into Cambodia and the tremendous frustrations that the relief workers faced in trying to help the Cambodian people. He is less successful in explaining the endless battles that took place in Geneva, New York, Bangkok, and Washington. Most seriously, Shawcross has underestimated the role of the U.S. government. In my view, it was the relentless pressure of genuinely concerned American officials that was critical in forcing timid, complacent, and bickering international relief officials to act. The United States may not have won any popularity contests at the United Nations for its arm-twisting, but the results justified any animosity created.

THE American dilemma was simple. Our financial contribution to the relief efforts was the largest of any nation. We were resettling by far the largest number of refugees. The requirements of international relief work, however, meant that we had to work primarily through the U.N. specialized agencies and through the voluntary agencies, and to get them to act expeditiously we often pushed very hard. Not surprisingly, many U.N. officials resented this deeply, all the more since they were so dependent on American financial support. The main agent of this pressure was the American who was to play the most important role in the response to the crisis, the brilliant and dedicated ambassador in Thailand, Morton Abramowitz. Shawcross accords Abramowitz grudging admiration; he does not give him the credit he deserves. In my admittedly biased view—Shawcross correctly identifies Abramowitz as a friend of mine, although our friendship was made by working together and did not pre-date our professional association—Abramowitz's relentless harassment of officials in Bangkok, Washington, Geneva, and New York contributed more than any other single factor (with the possible exception of the press coverage) to the ultimate success of the relief operations. Shawcross accurately conveys some of the deep annoyance felt by some officials of the U.N. The reader can judge for himself whether it was worth it.

The first law of disaster relief could well read: every political decision has humanitarian consequences, and every humanitarian program has political implications. For example, the Vietnamese-installed regime in Phnom Penh was ready to let the people of western Cambodia starve rather than permit food to be distributed by truck across the Thai border into areas in which their control was contested. As for food and relief supplies offered by many voluntary agencies to the Phnom Penh regime, the Vietnamese tried to extract political advantage from every offer of humanitarian assistance. In the face of such unrelieved cynicism, it was tempting to give up any effort to get relief supplies into Cambodia, and necessary to remember at all times that the purpose of getting aid inside Cambodia was to help preserve the Cambodian people in spite of the Vietnamese, not in collaboration with them.

Some American officials also contemplated using food to advance political objectives. Deny it to the people under Vietnamese control, one faction suggested, and somehow Hanoi's control over Cambodia would be weakened. Or distribute it only in those refugee areas which also sheltered the Khmer Rouge, and thereby help the anti-Vietnamese resistance continue. Deny it to those same areas, suggested others, and starve out any remnants of the murderous Khmer Rouge. But the use of relief efforts, the use of food, for political ends, would have been tragically wrong. Although Shawcross seems uncertain as to Washington's motives, the fact is that the objective of American policy, constantly reaffirmed at the highest levels, was to save lives on both sides of the Thai-Cambodian border, without regard to politics.

SUCCESS in that objective had an unintended consequence: the armies on both sides were strengthened by the relief efforts. The effort to save the Cambodian people unavoidably also helped the people who had nearly destroyed Cambodia. This was not the deliberate objective of U.S. policy, but an undesired and unavoidable result. Here is where I believe that Shawcross has gone wrong. While granting that "Vietnam bears the principal, though not the exclusive, responsibility for the continued crisis today," he charges the United States with a "casual acceptance of what was a fundamentally Chinese strategy to rebuild and support the Khmer Rouge [which] exhibited at best a loss of memory and lack of imagination, at worst a cynicism that will have long and disturbing repercussions on international consciousness."

This is a misreading of the policy decisions of American officials from President Carter and Secretary Vance on down. Shawcross may have found individual Americans whose attitudes reflected his conclusion, but Abramowitz and his team in Thailand did nothing that was intended to help the Khmer Rouge. The U.S. government was as aware as Shawcross of the murderous nature of Pol Pot's regime. China was of great importance to American foreign policy, but Peking did not decide, or even influence, Washington's approach to food distribution in Cambodia. If it had, Washington would have opposed any aid distribution *inside* Cambodia, where it was bound to help the pro-Vietnamese side. Instead the United States played a major role in mobilizing relief efforts inside a country whose government it opposed.

RELIEF to the people on the Thai border could be accomplished through a large number of United Nations agencies and private voluntary organizations with the approval of the Thai government. Working inside Cambodia was infinitely more difficult. Since neither the United States nor the U.N. recognized the Vietnamese-installed government in Phnom Penh, all aid within Cambodia had to be channeled through UNICEF, the only U.N. agency that had the authority to operate in the absence of recognition, or through private voluntary agencies like Oxfam.

The division of labor that was finally worked out—UNICEF inside Cambodia, U.N.H.C.R. (United Nations High Commission on Refugees) outside it—made a great deal of sense. But U.N.H.C.R. was terrified of exceeding its mandate and UNICEF was looking for ways to get out of Cambodia and back to its basic worldwide concern for the problems of children. Moreover, camps in Thailand—run by the Thai government and U.N.H.C.R.—were swollen with boat people and refugees from Laos; they were not putting out the welcome mat for Cambodians.

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Bowing to pressure from Bangkok, the U.N.H.C.R. refused to define the Cambodians who had come to the border as true refugees; the agency took responsibility only for those refugees processed into U.N.H.C.R. camps a few miles away. Thus the most dangerous and desperate area—the strip along the border—became a no man's land between the two major U.N. organizations, neither of which wanted the additional responsibility. Instead, aid and food distribution on the border was left to a motley assortment of uncoordinated organizations and individuals. They did a remarkable job under the circumstances.

BOTH inside and outside Cambodia, the performance of the United Nations' specialized agencies was generally disappointing, and would have been more so if not for American pressure. This is a sad conclusion, reluctantly arrived at, especially for those of us who believe the United Nations still has an important contribution to make to the solution of some of the world's problems. To be sure, without the U.N. the relief efforts would have been virtually impossible. But the U.N. agencies were tied up in their own thick web of inefficiency and squabbling. They consistently under-reacted to warnings from the region. Waldheim was reluctant to act; the U.N. Secretary-General behaved as though he was personally offended by the intrusion of the refugees into his long (and fortunately unsuccessful) campaign for reelection, a campaign which required that he not alienate either the Soviet Union or the Third World. What little he did do—such as presiding over the 1979 and 1980 conferences in Geneva—was in large part because of enormous pressure from the United States, Australia, the Western Europeans, and world opinion.

There is special irony in the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the United Nations High Commission on Refugees in 1980 mainly in recognition of its work in Southeast Asia. Giving this award to the U.N.H.C.R. as a symbolic recognition of the army of dedicated workers, many of them volunteers, who had flocked to the region, made some sense. But the U.N.H.C.R.'s early representatives in Bangkok were incompetent, and failed to recognize the problem. They fought other agencies for primacy, yet they refused to help or accept as ref-

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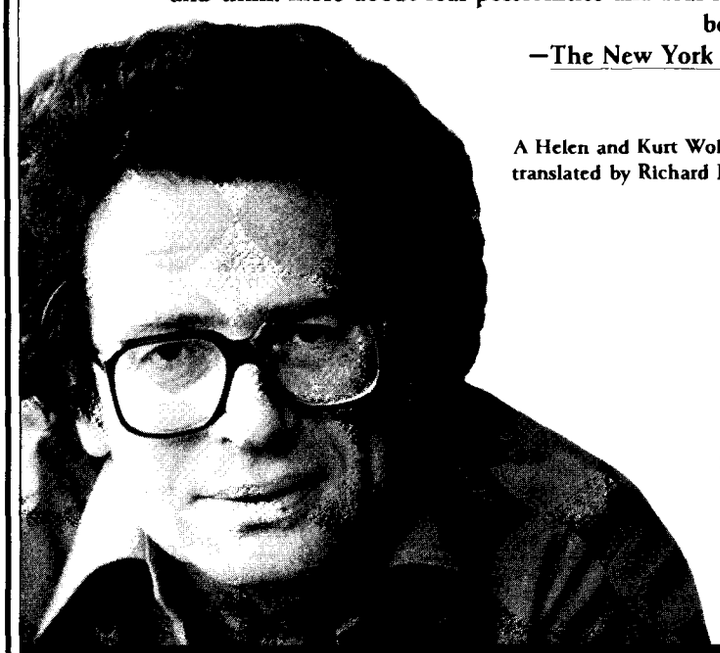

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ugees hundreds of thousands of Cambodians huddling in the open fields along the border. Giving the Nobel Peace Prize to that group of smug, overpaid, and world-weary Geneva-based functionaries was finally an abuse of that high honor.

I recognize that some, especially among the United Nations international civil servants, will dispute these judgments. They are harsher than, but not inconsistent with, Shawcross's picture of the international relief community, especially in the early period. Defenders of the U.N. agencies will point to the immensely difficult problems in trying to help the people of a country when the government in power has been denied (with American support) representation in the United Nations. Furthermore, the Vietnamese made life almost unbearable for the dedicated relief workers, even holding up barges of perishable food, for example, in an effort to charge heavy "haulage fees"—really payoffs to Hanoi.

Shawcross thinks that the relief agencies and the press exaggerated the size of the Cambodian food crisis. The truth is somewhat more complex than he suggests. No one ever knew exactly how many people were at the border, nor just how serious the threat of starvation was inside Cambodia. There was no time to make a precise determination. Those who cared about the issue needed to mobilize other people and resources, and the best way to do this was to make estimates of disaster which, while credible, were as pessimistic as possible. In the absence of precise information, it was safer to risk overestimating the problem and having too much aid, rather than underestimating it and having too little. As Abramowitz said, "If only 100,000 people die instead of one million, does that mean it is not a crisis?"

Shawcross's book attempts to rescue from dusty archives and fading memories the story of how the world reacted to one particularly grave crisis. His worthy hope is that lessons will be drawn for the next disaster. Too little of this sort of thing has been done; once a disaster has lost its television audience it is quickly forgotten, even if there is still war and there are still refugees along the Thai border today. I would contribute the following conclusions to the discussion:

—Despite all the difficulties and inefficiency, the Cambodian relief efforts and the resettlement of Indochinese refugees turned out to be relatively successful. A very large number of lives were saved.

—This was due in large part to American leadership, an essential ingredient in such situations. We pay much of the bill, and we have a right to insist on better performance from the international civil servants who carry out the job. We should not shrink from the responsibility. No one else can fill it.

—The international agencies of the U.N. and the private voluntary agencies are filled with dedicated people, but they must be pressured constantly. (A personal prejudice: U.N.H.C.R. should not be headquartered in the unreal beauty of Geneva, but in some sweatier city closer to the world of refugees.)

—The press is essential. Without massive coverage—and that means television pictures—little will be done. (In this regard Henry Kamm of *The New York Times* deserves special mention for his reporting from Thailand.)

—Relief operations are expensive and inevitably wasteful. But they are an unavoidable obligation of the richer nations. Countries, like Japan, which are slow to recognize this responsibility must be pressured until they too respond.

—Politics will always intrude. But the first obligation of the donor nations must be to rescue the victims. Political consequences, even serious ones, must be set aside when lives are at stake.

—It is better to overestimate than to underestimate the size of the problem.

—There will be other major man-made disasters, and more must be done to anticipate the need for emergency arrangements.

Natural disasters can, of course, occur anywhere on earth. Latin America and especially Africa are more likely candidates for future man-made crises than Asia, and they may receive far less publicity than did disasters that came out of Indochina. Shawcross has done future victims a service by trying to interest people in the complex story of how the world reacts to this kind of disaster. The specifics of each crisis will vary enormously. There will be those who say, for example, that Cambodia teaches us no lessons for African relief. They are wrong. The central lesson, embodied in every detail of Shawcross's story, is that people must care, that extraordinary efforts are required to rouse

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people from their comfortable good time in order to do something to help those living, in George Steiner's phrase, in the "enveloping folds of inhuman time."

If people do care, miracles can happen. Take the case of Chi Luu, one of the boat people, who came to New York with his family in November 1979, after five months in a refugee camp. Within a year, Mr. Luu had entered City College of New York, studying, working part-time in a can factory, and improving his English. Last month he graduated as valedictorian of his class, with a straight-A average in his major, engineering, and only a single B, in freshman English. He is entering M.I.T. this fall.

RICHARD HOLBROOKE

Richard Holbrooke is vice-president of Public Strategies, a Washington-based consulting firm, and a senior adviser to Shearson Lehman/American Express.

MADAME DE STYLE

D.V.
by Diana Vreeland
with George Plimpton and Christopher Hemphill

(Knopf, 224 pp., $15.95)

> Why don't you . . .
> Sweep into the drawing room on your first big night with an enormous red fox muff of many skins?
>
> Rinse your blond child's hair in dead champagne to keep its gold, as they do in France?
>
> Wear bare knees and long white knitted socks, as Unity Mitford does when she takes tea with Hitler at the Carlton in Munich?
>
> —Diana Vreeland, from her "Why Don't You" columns which, beginning in 1936, ran for decades in *Harper's Bazaar*.

IN THE late 1950s Mort Sahl did a routine about some new invention called Hi Fi. Sahl had a friend with spectacular equipment—and a record of a man chewing celery. "And you know," he recalled wide-eyed, "the set was so good it sounded exactly like a guy chewing celery in your own living room."

D.V. is the moral and aesthetic equivalent of that record. Diana Vreeland, doyenne of *Harper's Bazaar* and *Vogue*, partygoer and giver, intimate of the near and the mere great, has been pointed at a tape recorder. Two men, George Plimpton and Christopher Hemphill, have gone through the transcripts with pencil and scissors, and they have produced a book. And you know, it sounds exactly like a gorgon bombinating in your own ear. You would like to show her the door, or the bathroom, or the window. But you cannot. After all, she is over 80 years old, and she is entitled to reminisce, to cackle, to embroider. But as the non sequiturs boom on, as the names drop to the floor, condemned to writhe until sundown, you have to take some sort of refuge. The earplugs are with your snorkel at the beach house. The wine is gone. You close your eyes in simulation of a rapt listener. Soon the voice fades. The nap lasts who knows how long? And when you rise to consciousness, there she is, still yakking. Dynasties have risen and fallen, buildings have gone up and down, revolutions have altered the fate of nations, and still she has gone on. She will always go on, you come to believe, a rag-trade Scheherazade, killing you softly with pronouns.

She was born sometime around 1903; her father was something in finance, her mother a famous beauty with an indiscreet cohort of lovers. Or so she says. Personally, I don't think she was of woman born; evidence shows that she was written by Oscar Wilde just before his death in 1900. She is his Sphinx without a secret, one of those women who are "the most reliable as they have no memory for the important" . . . "a dragon of good taste."

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"I loathe nostalgia," says D.V. in her opening sentence. And she follows with a cascade of memories. Apparently she has no idea of what the word means. But then, she has little knowledge of what many consequential terms or individuals mean. In the 1920s she runs into Josephine Baker at a Paris theater. The chanteuse has a cheetah on a leash. The author burbles, "Style was a great thing in those days."

D.V.'s most recent achievements are the overhyped costume exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum. Her true fame, however, comes from an undisputed mastery of the unexamined aphorism: "Pink is the navy blue of India" or "Lizard is always best." My favorite occurs in chapter seven, in which she discusses the decline of the white race: "The Western world will go . . . the West is *boring* itself to death! And talking itself to death!"

Yes. Well. In chapter after chapter it is to be seen that D.V. has a great many things to talk about. She knows, for example, that a male Kabuki theater star has more femininity than any geisha: "I promise you, if I had a daughter I would send her to him to learn how to become a woman." She remembers a British aristocrat named Fruity Metcalfe. The Prince of Wales's aide-de-camp did not accomplish much in life. She once asked him,

> "Fruity, what do you do in the morning?"
> "I dress."
> "Well, so do I."
> "Well, they put out my ties and so forth and I have to *choose*."

And so does D.V. She chooses, for example, not to discuss politics: "They're beyond my ken. But I do know that the rise of Hitler—which more or less coincided with the abdication of the Duke of Windsor—was the passing of the empire."

Can there be any purpose in reprinting this glutinous twaddle? For the publisher, certainly. The endlessly gullible public may believe that D.V. and her sister were the last ones to see the Mona Lisa before it was stolen from the Louvre; that she was a few floors down from the abattoir on the Night of the Long Knives. ("Madame," says her maid, "something terrible is happening in this hotel." Later D.V. confesses, "I've learned a great deal from maids in my life.") Or that she just happened to be looking into the perfect skies of upstate New York and somehow saw Lindbergh winging to Le Bourget in The Spirit of St. Louis.

DIANA VREELAND BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The other, smaller public may find accounts of this kind enlightening for different reasons. Vreeland was an important figure in fashion for decades, as an editor and arbiter. When what she thought of as style was confined to outrageously costumed models, to exhibits of navels or zebra striped bracelets, when she was warning consumers: BEWARE OF PEARL GRAY WITH PINK or PUT APRICOT WITH ORANGE, it was harmless; it might even have made some dowdy matron or upwardly mobile secretary think of herself as svelte. In any case, it moved the goods, boosted a great many department stores and boutiques, and helped give the International Ladies Garment Workers Union a substantial treasury.

But with D.V. style was never confined to the wardrobe. It was to be found wherever there was action. It was to be found in politics, in history. The amoral, aesthetic nature of D.V.'s understanding of such things was introduced in her previous book, *Allure*, published in 1980, her cocktail table credo. Reminiscing about Germany in the '30s, she recalls only a cozy spa in Freiburg-im-Brisgau.

> We'd take baths and massages and walk through the Black Forest, which was too beautiful for any words. . . . And there was a famous doctor at the *Kurhaus*, Dr. Hoven, who wore black gloves. He had cancer of the hands and his fingers were rotting away. He'd burned himself inventing the *Grenz* ray, of which there were only three in the world. I used to have it every morning on my sinuses—controlled, of course, just a little pad here and there. In the coming war they were going to release it and everyone in sight would be dead—they'd tell you all this.
>
> "Ooo . . ." I'd say, "I can hardly wait! You Germans are so *busy*—such busybodies!"

Later she is awed by Evita, particularly on her deathbed: "It's so totally arranged—so totally *political*. . . . Even on her death bed she was made up. . . . All that mattered was that she be *well photographed*." Even de Gaulle is praised for his design—he had "the most beautiful diction . . . and a *totally* French face."

D.V. never understood that leaders are not like threads, that very often their warp is worse than their woof. The inability to make moral distinctions is a common failing in the fashion business, as it is among the aristocrats it so abjectly admires. D.V. is mad about her "Golden Prince," the Duke of Windsor,

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for example, who twenty years after World War II admitted, "I never thought Hitler was such a bad chap." And why should he or she? Garments, governments, parties, rodomontade, parades, receptions, castles, embassies, it was all in vogue. Style was a great thing in those days. Take another of the beloved aristocrats, a man whom D.V. quickly brings to mind, Sir Henry "Chips" Channon, a *Vogue* and *Harper's* sort of chap, an American from Chicago, "belonging to the order of those who HAVE," as he put it, who married a Guinness and became a Member of Parliament. Alas, his memoirs are not available in the United States, but Britishers are now being treated to a reprint. Chips had money, he had clothes, he had connections. He was invited everywhere. Here he is in Germany, 1936, meeting the Führer: "more excited than when I met Mussolini in 1926 in Perugia and more stimulated, I am sorry to say, than when I was blessed by the Pope in 1920." He especially likes "Goering's merry eyes twinkling . . . he really is a most disarming man." Chips's criteria are, like D.V.'s, strictly external; young Anthony Eden is "mild, and I have never had an exaggerated opinion of his brilliance, though his appearance is magnificent." Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain also has style, but there are those unfortunates who do not, like so many who hang around the League of Nations,

> an anti-dictator club. The bars and lobbies of the League's building are full of Russians and Jews who intrigue with and dominate the press, and spend their time spreading rumors of approaching war, but I don't believe them, not with Neville at the helm.

The attitude of the upper-class twit was aptly skewered by Noel Coward long, long ago:

> People's behavior
> Away from Belgravia
> Would make you aghast
> So much variety
> Watching Society
> Scampering past
> If you have any mind at all
> Gibbon's divine *Decline and Fall*
> Seems pretty flimsy
> No more than a whimsy. . . .

But satire, as we know, is what poses on Saturday night. Besides, worship of the superficial is hardly an exclusive of lords and ladies and editors. Nor is it confined to fascists past. Smarter and more serious individuals than D.V. have searched for style in history. In the Soviet Union of the '30s, Edmund Wilson visited the Moscow Mausoleum and found that Lenin had "a beautiful face, of exquisite fineness; and—what proves sufficiently its authenticity—it is profoundly aristocratic. . . . " George Bernard Shaw agreed: Lenin's was "a pure intellectual type . . . that is the true aristocracy." As for Stalin, we have Ambassador Joseph Davies's assurance that "his brown eye is exceedingly wise and gentle. A child would like to sit on his lap and a dog would sidle up to him." And here is Simone de Beauvoir's description of Mao and Chou: "What is so winning about the Chinese leaders is that not one of them plays a part; they are dressed like anybody else . . . and their faces are not deformed either by class mannerisms or by . . . the need to maintain a front . . . these are just faces, plainly and wholly human." But to go on is to succumb to D.V.'s social disease. Nor need we look so far afield for more of D.V.-like shallowness. Her mean aesthetic approach to the world is enshrined monthly in *Interview* magazine, the organ of the smart celebrity cult, upon which the difference between Thomas Enders and Mariel Hemingway, between politicians

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and pretty girls (or boys), is utterly lost. What matters is only the money and the clothes. All this may seem faded in the Year of the Rat, when jeans have become the Esperanto of outerwear and no one dresses for dinner. Still, what William Hazlitt noticed even before D.V.'s time remains truer than ever before: "fashion constantly begins and ends in the two things it abhors most—singularity and vulgarity."

Knowledge? Memory? Consequences? Never heard of them. Style is all, and if style once meant an indication of character, an expression that had a value other than shock, that was before D.V. & Co. rewrote the dictionary. And Bartlett's. "In my end is my beginning," she concludes. "Who said that—Mary Queen of Scots, no? Look it up." I did. While I was rummaging, I found this:

> It is style which complements affirmation with limitation and with humility; it is style which makes it possible to act effectively, but not absolutely; it is style which enables us to find harmony between the pursuits of ends essential to us, and the regard for the views, the sensibilities, the aspirations of others; it is style which is the deference that action pays to uncertainty; it is above all style through which power defers to reason.

Robert Oppenheimer said that. He is not mentioned in *D.V.* Why don't you . . . Read the physicist's memoirs and stay away from the scaly stuff? There are still some occasions when lizard is not best after all.

STEFAN KANFER

Stefan Kanfer is a senior editor at *Time* magazine.

A PROPHETESS AND THE PERSHINGS

Cassandra: A Novel and Four Essays by Christa Wolf

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 305 pp., $17.95)

Cassandra—daughter of the Trojan King Priam, prophetess, madwoman, murdered as a slave in the house of the victorious Atridae—is the title, and the heroine, of a slim novella by the East German writer Christa Wolf. In the stillness that has prevailed within German literature for some years, this work about the Trojan catastrophe has the sound of a distant but nonetheless unmistakable sigh.

The 55-year-old writer Christa Wolf lives in East Berlin. Her works appear, sometimes in their first publication, in the West. That makes her politically invulnerable in the East and morally invulnerable in the West—almost. Cultural officials in the German Democratic Republic, for example, have excised sixty lines of her accompanying essays on poetics. In these lines Wolf speaks of the "war preparations" on both sides of the border, and goes on to say that "censorship and self-censorship" are "war-enhancing." The censors in the German Democratic Republic are the most peace-loving people in the world: they reacted by being insulted. On the other side of the German border, *Cassandra* has been on the best-seller list since last year—an unexpected destiny for a book about a priestess of Apollo in antiquity, but predictable enough for a powerful modern parable about men's wars and women's mourning, about honor, arrogance, and alienation.

Cassandra is, on the face of it, a feminist revision of Aeschylus's *Oresteia.* Christa Wolf believes neither in fate nor in the gods, and most decidedly not in their childish imitators, the heroes in shining armor. But it is the book's other truths, its private laments about love and about men, its pain and its thousand precisely catalogued sentiments, that weigh more heavily. They reflect German, not Hellenic, anxieties; and also the traditional German difficulty of transmuting those anxieties into practical political actions. The preference is for a new world. *Cassandra* foretells a downfall of existing political institutions. This land and its artists love downfalls.

Wolf has brought back to life the *Bildungsroman,* that typically German genre that seemed to have been buried with Thomas Mann. Her novella's heroine has the same elevated style as its author. The book resounds loudly with the thumpings of bronze swords on leather shields; it is written with the pathos of a funeral oration. The gods and heroes of Greece are once again fixed in the firmament of German spiritual life—this time, though, as failures. There is an admirable device at work here, as old as the dramatic competitions of Athens themselves: Christa Wolf, who grew up on Karl Marx, himself a lover of the classics, transposes her German themes—fear of war, loneliness, spiritual flight in a world administered with icy exactitude—to the distant cosmos of Greek myths. Thus she gives modern anxieties a classical aura, and literary authority as well. Whatever seems timeless by virtue of its costuming in an age-old tradition must also be true.

Because her modern Cassandra believes neither in the gods nor in any authorities above and beyond her own prophetic frenzy, Wolf is able to imbue her work with the charm of startling anachronism. Glaring neon light shines upon this book as if to proclaim over the entrance to the Temple of Apollo: "The prophet is in." On the compact stage of Greek mythology this Cassandra disports herself with the skeptical, ironic, scornful, and vulnerable awareness of a disappointed peace activist toward the close of the twentieth century.

Wolf's Cassandra arraigns the military—that is, masculine—decisions of Troy, and wants to convince the royal parents that war for the sake of the beautiful Helen is senseless. The contemporary reader should realize, however, that Homer (and his listeners) did not employ such terms as "sense," "decision," or even "psyche"—and that in the god-ruled world of the Atridae there were no concepts (and no commensurate experiences, either) that would correspond to what the sociological jargon of Marxism might term "the autonomy of Cassandra as a subject." Thus it happens that Wolf's heroine now and then suggests one of those eccentric Anouilh productions of the 1950s—Antigone in a Dior dress, or Odysseus in a double-breasted suit. This proclivity to modernize may well be rooted in the author's own disappointed experience of the classics: "To whom shall I confess," she asks in an

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essay appended to the book, "that the *Iliad* bores me?" The Cassandra of Aeschylus foretells fate, the ineluctable. Wolf's Cassandra pours out her scorn upon people blind to their own fate and unable to confront it. She is not the daughter of Hecuba, but of Rosa Luxemburg.

The narrative begins with an interior monologue of the enslaved Cassandra in front of the Lion's Gate at Mycenae, a few hours before the sacrificial death that fate has determined for her. Anamnesis—recollections of the decisive experiences at Troy—is the technique, and at the same time the path of the book through the thicket of associations, fragmentary experiences, and rediscovered emotions. Cassandra recollects her childhood at the court of Troy. She remembers her young lover Aeneas, who did not dare to touch her—a mythological lover indeed. She recounts the magic religious world of her slaves, the gods that failed before all others. And she chronicles the events that led to the downfall of her city: how her brother Paris kidnapped Helen from the Greeks, how on his way home he lost her again to the enthralled king of Egypt (no, this is not the official version of Homer). It was a cruel joke, perpetrated by Troy's royal politburo—a whole city fighting for an idea, for Paris's honor and Helen's beauty, when in reality the lady was not there at all. Is this what Wolf is trying to tell her readers: that ideas are not worth fighting for?

At the close Cassandra stands before the reader as a whole person, calmly awaiting death, without hope, but replete with pleasure at the fulfillment of the downfall she had foretold: "For I drew pleasure from all things I saw—pleasure, not hope! And lived on to behold." This is the pleasure of being proved right, a German propensity that also permeates the day-to-day doings of the nation's peace movement. Cassandra, who has foretold the downfall of Troy, who saw through what was happening—the sclerotic politics of Priam, the Gestapo mentality of the besieged Trojans, the psychopathology of "Achilles, the brute"—she, the prophetess, believes she has uncovered the secret of her city, even of the Greeks themselves: "O, that they don't know how to live. That this is the real misfortune, the truly fatal danger—I came to understand this only gradually." For a prophetess that last remark is a rather curious admission.

This Cassandra, and not the one chosen by the gods, totters between epileptically induced frenzies and feminist meditations. In her many roles—eyewitness and member of a conquered people, daughter, culprit, citizen of Troy, mother, intellectual, outsider—she fulfills all the analytic burdens the author has loaded upon her. In her accompanying essay Wolf writes, for instance, that Cassandra "is one of the first feminine figures whose destiny has had a predetermining effect on what was to happen to women across three thousand years: that she is transformed into an object." (Supposedly she was raped by the Achaean Ajax the Lesser at the sanctuary of Athena.) As a good Marxist intellectual, Wolf treats the half-mythical, half-historical princess "as a vibrant, socially and politically committed person," who wants to find out about things for herself. The only possible profession for her caste—that of priestess—is seen as part of the "emancipation process" from her aristocratic family background. Happily such nonsensical interpretations didn't find their way out of the essay and into

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the fiction itself. In her literary guise Cassandra remains less categorizable, and what Wolf threatens—"To lead her back out of the myth and into the (apparent) social and historical coordinates" of the ancient world—does not happen, owing to her own poetic power.

What remains is a *roman à clef* setting forth German anxieties in a manner that could not be more intense:

> The future speaks to me in only this one sentence: I will be murdered no later than today. . . . The thought occurs to me that I am secretly following the course of my fear. Or more accurately, the course of its unbridling, or still more accurately, its liberation. Yes, fear, too, can be liberated, and thus is shown to belong together with everything and everyone that is oppressed.

Argos and Troy, Agamemnon and Priam: in Wolf's *Cassandra* these are terms for war preparations, self-deception, the madness of male heroism—not what is discovered in the dim past, but striking symbols of the German present, in East and West.

While Cassandra could still give shrill voice to her anxieties, however, Wolf virtually gives up on language in her essay: "What these anonymous planning staffs have in mind for us is unspeakable; the language that could encompass it appears not to exist." And:

> Nobody has to be Cassandra any more. Most people begin to sense what is to come. An unease that many conceive of as emptiness, as loss of meaning, that gives rise to fear. A new infusion of meaning through worn-out institutions—to which many have been accustomed—is no longer to be hoped. A zig-zag course. But a way out is not in sight. One feels trapped. Australia is no way out.

"What is to come," naturally, is nuclear war. Wolf has draped a Greek garland around the "Protestant anxiety," as Richard Perle has called it, of the Germans.

"Anxiety," Europe's sense of life in the war years up to 1945, seemed until recently to be no longer a characteristic of the Germans—at most an obsession of Woody Allen (whose modest art has been enormously celebrated in Germany). But today German teachers, artisans, students, and apprentices take out half-page advertisements to proclaim that "We are afraid." A nation of Cassandras searching for the experience of Troy? Wolf may be on to something.

IN 1967 the philosopher Karl Jaspers (yet another prophet) foretold from his Swiss exile the coming misery of the German Federal Republic. The Germans, he opined at the time, would be ready to exchange the political freedom that had fallen into their laps in the military defeat of 1945 for a guaranteed "security." Security was the shibboleth of those years of the economic miracle between the Rhine and the Elbe. Not freedom, not political participation, not social creativity—what people cherished most was the experience of security. Upon these coordinates of national consensus everything was constructed—the turn to the West for political support, the farewell to the frightful past of National Socialism. Even the smallest local elections tended to center on the need for "security." The country had been through too much and wanted to rest. The irony is that this desire for security is the obverse of fear—two sides of the same coin.

Into this empty chamber of the German spirit, into the self-imposed uneventfulness of the past two decades, economic and political malaise has forcibly penetrated. America's fits of weakness, Russia's new aggressive-

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ıess, the unexpectedly overt quality of ATO's nuclear strategy, the nervous rain of the arms competition, the culrally pessimistic prognosis for life in a ıst-industrial society, the riddle of gh technology (for Germany it reains an enigma made in Japan)—there as been nothing in recent years to aise the spirits of the nation. It's as if he enemy were already at the gates.

The realm which German poets and philosophers—Goethe, Schiller, Hölderlin, Kleist, Novalis, the Schlegels—discovered two centuries ago, and which German archeologists dug up and German classical philologists interpreted, blooms anew in Christa Wolf's book. They called it simply "Greece"—a land in which freedom was always conceivable, as rebellion against the Gods. Antigone was the Jane Fonda of German idealism. A nation sought aesthetic sanctuary in the Greece of its illusions, at a time when the anachronistic absolutism of its petty principalities afforded insufficient civil freedom. Wolf's *Cassandra* represents Germany's renewed reverence for a Greece that has been reconstructed for one main purpose: to serve as sanctuary for those oppressed by the present. Yet behind the archaizing tone of voice, behind all the olive trees and city ramparts of its Greek background, there lies concealed a tormenting experience of the German present: "No way out, all emergency exits are closed." Or, to maintain the classical context, the thread of Ariadne has been lost.

MICHAEL NAUMANN

Michael Naumann is senior foreign editor of *Der Spiegel*.

WHY EUROPE LOOKS WEST

Antipolitics
by George Konrad
translated by Richard E. Allen

(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 243 pp., $12.95)

There are signs in today's world of letters of something that one day may be termed the "second coming of Central Europe." The first coming was the phenomenon of Kafka, Schulz, Musil, Canetti, Gombrowicz, Witkacy—a shock of modernity much more painful, genuine, and prophetic than its Western counterpart. Today's Central Europe appears as a domain of historical irony and a particular political awareness. Its first concern is to shed the misleading and irritating tag of "Eastern Europe," which—if it still exists—is an altogether different thing. Its most outspoken voices try to convey a message of double suffering. There is the "simple" suffering of living under repressive, antidemocratic regimes, and there is also a more complex feeling of a bogus existence outside history: outside one's own history—since the nations of this part of the world feel deprived of their legitimate destiny—but also outside history in a more general sense.

Today Central Europe is a place where the normal flow of social energy has been trapped in a vicious circle, where waves of human striving rise and break apparently without moving anywhere. Although the local regimes may occasionally ease their oppression, and living may sometimes seem almost acceptable, the second burden remains. It is largely responsible for the underlying tension and sadness which is always there, which is often difficult to explain to a casual visitor. This land has its own arrogant and indifferent deity called "Yalta"—a name repeated so often with anger or resignation that, as Timothy Garton Ash observes in his *The Polish Revolution*, it may as well mean "fate," or "such is life."

It is not surprising, therefore, that Yalta is the focal point of this noble, sincere, but also disturbingly misguided essay by the Hungarian novelist George Konrad. Like many other Central Europeans, Konrad argues that the nations of Soviet-dominated Europe will never reconcile themselves to their political and cultural captivity. No matter how benevolent and lax the regimes may become, people will never renounce their dream of full sovereignty and full de-

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mocracy. They want to be members of the European community, and they will employ all means of opposition to achieve this goal. Because of the unparalleled tension created by the arbitrary division of Europe, the region will always remain a dangerous and destabilizing factor in global politics.

For some politicians, Yalta, and its child the Iron Curtain, is a fetish of the "status quo," supposedly keeping in check adversary political forces. Yet, as Konrad demonstrates, the very concept of the "status quo" is an illusion. The nations of Central Europe and the Soviet Union are involved in a sometimes latent, sometimes open, war. Both are playing to win. Standing by Yalta—says the Hungarian author—is not a long-term strategy: "If the West wants Yalta the Soviets will move beyond Yalta—by moving westward. If the West wants Yalta, it can have November 4, 1956, in Budapest, August 21, 1968, in Prague, and December 13, 1981, in Warsaw."

The only real movement toward lasting peace and security can be a movement against Yalta, and toward the abolition of the Iron Curtain. Still, says Konrad, "at the present time no one has a comprehensive strategy of peace. There is no theory about how the present system of international relations might be transformed." And there is a specific reason for the absence of this strategy, according to the author: neither of the two major power blocs is really interested in finding it. Both are equally responsible for procuring and maintaining the dangerous division for base political reasons. They need Yalta and the Iron Curtain because it is a useful justification of their own domination and their claims for more power. Central Europe, and Europe in general, is their helpless hostage, made to bear the greatest burdens and live with the greatest dangers created by their insane competition.

At this point Konrad's reasoning departs from that of most other Central European intellectuals from Soviet dominated countries. They tend to take a decisively pro-American stand, as far as the global competition between the superpowers is concerned. Instead, *Antipolitics* echoes the "plague on both your houses" argument frequently heard from West European unilateralists, pacifists, and neutralists. The Soviet Union is bad, but the United States is bad, too. Both pursue selfish goals, incompatible with the goals of small nations in the world. Both do not hesitate to use the same ruthless methods to expand their control. Both are governed by oligarchies of immoral and narrow-minded elderly men, who know no other sensual pleasure than that of exercising power, and for whom everything that is not politics is merely a political instrument. Betting on either of them for the peaceful future of the world, it is argued, would be a grave mistake.

Something utterly different is needed: "antipolitics," which Konrad defines as the domination of civil society over the political elites, or, in his own words,

> the emergence of independent forums that can be appealed to against political power: it is a counterpower that cannot take power and does not wish to. Power it has already, here and now, by reasons of its moral and cultural weight.

The author seems to suggest that only the "antipolitical" society led by the elite of international intellectuals (the "liberated cerebrum") can eventually convince both superpowers to stop the senseless competition and to make a "historical deal" involving the mutual withdrawal of forces from Europe and allowing for the long overdue unification and neutralization of the Continent.

THE profound error of this view lies in the assumption of a total symmetry between the political mechanisms governing both superpowers' global pursuits. The internal system of the Soviet Union, it is often claimed, does not prevent it from behaving just like any other great power in history, and like its contemporary competitor, America. Its interests include military and economic security, of course, as well as the measure of international respect due any great and proud nation. What could be easier, granted enough goodwill on both sides, than to have a cool look at these interests, to find common goals, and to negotiate conflicting ones? Having assured mutual security in a treaty, what could be easier than to live peacefully ever after, respecting each other's ideological differences?

Such a view, however, does not bring us any closer to understanding why no such treaty has ever been proposed; why, as Konrad says, both heavyweight champions "circle each other in the ring." Blaming it all on a lust for power, on ideological zeal, on a need to prove who is the toughest seems to be a rather simplistic explana-

ALCATRAZ

From Grizzly Peak Boulevard the huge bay silvers,
Aluminums under a cloud,
Flat now as a pauper's pan, then a gourmet's,
Some steam, some fire, and in the bull's-eye
Alcatraz. An unimprisoned view,
Almost to my home in San Jose,
Surely to mad Agnew, makes me ask
To hairpin down to see if anything
Without this distance is this free.

We stub along the wharf-boards. One
Fishing booth is charcoal where an arsonist
Camped the night. Tiny bullheads
Lie on the pier as if some fisherman
Had cried them there. Hot Grizzly Peak
Is far behind, a thermos the cold forgot.

"Isn't that white body
A tern? And doesn't it close
Its eyes? Isn't it sleeping
Where it cannot nest—heart patting a dent
In the swells?"

The light comes down on Alcatraz.
Behind it the red suspended bridge:
Suicides can jump toward the executed.

You look flat across the water at the fine
Rock upon which to suffer.
"Maybe not for Alcatraz," you say, "or hell,
But I worry I have no guilt. See
How at the level of punishment
We can't see it as well."

SANDRA MCPHERSON

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even of the Soviet Union.

reason for the prolonged and stalemate between the superpow- not the similarity of their goals, e total lack of symmetry between rces that push them into an adver- elationship. Konrad himself quite ately notes one of the differences, ugh he stops short of drawing the er conclusions. He admits that the torical deal," or the thorough and plete *détente* that he envisions, ld automatically reduce the Soviet ion to the rank of a secondary pow- while leaving America's position ctically intact. Of the two oppo- nts, the Soviet Union is simply much eaker politically, economically, and lturally. Only in the instruments of estruction can it be on a par with the Jnited States.

For America, on the other hand, be- ng a superpower is a genuine burden. It constantly conflicts with its domestic interests and the basic ideals of its society. An average American takes little pride in his country's imperial involvements, and understands them even less. Global politics is evidently a divisive and disruptive factor in American political life. Not so in the Soviet Union. In fact, the imperial and militaristic elements seem to have an important structural function in the Soviet state, keeping it together when almost everything else fails. They unify its political elite, and keep at least some sectors of its economy disciplined and relatively effective. Their removal could bring about consequences that the Kremlin leaders are evidently not ready to face. Why should they take considerable risks and expose their country to an almost certain degradation?

Some will say that they may feel obliged to take this step back in order to make a great leap forward, to gain access to badly needed foreign technology and to start long-overdue political reforms. Yet no one so far has produced a convincing proof that the Soviet leadership is really willing to undertake some major structural reforms of their system. If such is their intention, they are exceptionally good at keeping it secret from the world, from their society, and from each other. A transformation like this would have to be preceded, moreover, by a considerable effort to create institutional and cultural mechanisms sufficient to reshape the highly inflexible Soviet material without breaking it into pieces. So far no such influences exist, and nothing indicates that they will arise in the foreseeable future. Neither is there a group in sight within the Soviet political elite which might seem willing and able to take this task upon itself. It is not enough to blame the conspicuous absence of such preparations on the cold war, or on Western unfriendliness; the effort to move toward true internal reform is certainly a less expensive and dangerous operation than, say, the invasion of Afghanistan. Claiming that all this may happen *after* the West opens its hearts and armories to the Soviet Union belongs to political science fiction rather than to the realm of the rational assessment of reality.

THE question of global security unfortunately cannot be considered separately from the particular Soviet system. Security, for the leaders of both political blocs, means primarily the security of the systems themselves. In the Western world this concern is shared by the vast majority of the society. The Communist leaders, on the other hand, try to maintain their political structures amid open hatred, or at best uneasy docility. The Soviet Union is indeed insecure, and this fact motivates most of its internal and external actions. But it is the kind of insecurity that has very little to do with armies and military pacts. It is an inherent insecurity that results from the Soviet system's very definition. One should not be misled by its apparent stability and power. As Konrad himself observes, it masks extreme chaos and confusion. And its ability to control almost anything within its reach breeds more insecurity; it is just a reverse of its profound weakness and vulnerability.

The Soviet Union is the only country where the Communist system has been installed and is maintained exclusively by internal forces. It would be a mistake, however, to assume that it is perpetuated by the sheer power of the police, or by bureaucratic centralism. Totalitarianism is predominately a cultural phenomenon. It can exist only through a highly complex system of interrelated restraints whose chief purpose is to abolish the most basic human energies and forces of social transformation. Its weakness and insecurity stems from the fact that it can hope to survive only as long as it manages to suppress not only societies but history itself, which is a strenuous and—let us hope—impossible task.

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observers are often bemused when the Kremlin leaders find it appropriate to stomp their feet when too many young people take to wearing blue jeans and listening to rock-and-roll. They sneer at their provincialism when they thunder against abstract art and "formalist" poetry. They react with horrified disbelief when the rulers of the greatest power on earth risk international outrage by slowly killing a noble elderly couple who stubbornly repeat some old truths that are obvious to the whole civilized world. There is a sad logic, however, in the tremendous overkill with which the Soviet system reacts to its real or imaginary opponents. Everything that unsettles the delicate balance of modern totalitarianism, and tries to awaken even marginal human energies, poses a real and serious threat. Everything that is not controlled, or at least potentially controllable, may bring about the end of totalitarianism.

The Soviet global policy, marked by excessive suspicion and erratic aggressiveness, seems to be motivated less by the fear of military attack, by economic interests, or even by the ambitions of Soviet leaders, than by the awareness that the outside and open world, through its very existence, exercises tremendous pressure, indeed threatens the continuity of the Soviet system. Nowhere is that awareness more visible than in Europe, which is the central consideration of Konrad's book. It is hard to imagine that the Eastern superpower feels really endangered by what the author calls the "tripwire" conventional forces of the Atlantic Alliance. As for the nuclear threat, the Russians seem to be at least as confident about their ability to deter as the Americans. Besides, they must know that no center of political decision in the democratic world is inclined or able to give the order for totally unprovoked aggression.

The Kremlin leaders are seasoned politicians who do not confuse statements about the "empire of evil" with calls for an immediate crusade. Yet they have been consistently using a combination of military moves, diplomatic pressures, and political manipulations in order to evoke in Western Europe the atmosphere of fear, uncertainty, and imminent doom. The purpose of this game seems to be to encircle, isolate, and antagonize vital political and cultural centers of the free world in · to disarm and neutralize them r ly—without necessarily striking a directly. They certainly believe only an intimidated and docile E may be a guarantee (temporary, sure) of their "security."

Yalta, of course, was a gigantic forward, a tremendous gain, w must have surprised Stalin himsel this historical gambit the West was ïve and short-sighted. The leader the Allied powers behaved less t gallantly toward their recent frie from Central Europe, and they (played an embarrassing lack of awa ness of what was really at stake. Yet remains to be proved that a radica different outcome could have been s cured without considerable politic and military risks that no one seeme willing to take. What is unquestionable however, is the impossible situation o the Central European nations, deprivec of their legitimate rights and determined that things in their part of the world should not stay the way they are now.

At a certain point in his book Konrad seems to suggest that even within the confines of Yalta there is considerable room for improvement. Central Europe, in the opinion of the Hungarian writer, cannot abolish the Iron Curtain, or renounce Yalta, on its own. But by testing the flexibility of some elements of the system, it can save a number of values essential to its identity, and perhaps pave the road toward a global adjustment. Konrad refers us, of course, to the phenomenon known as th "Hungarian experiment." In an implici critique of the Polish revolution of 1980, the author says:

> I don't believe that a new Central European identity will arise on the wings of emotionally charged movements, even mass movements, with the stormy popular tribunes and revolutionary personalities that typically go with them.

The social strategy to achieve a modicum of liberty under Communist regimes, according to Konrad, should rather be loose, individual, "biological," growing in all possible directions, feeling its way along the path of least resistance, and seeking freedom in the areas where people are already freer—in their private time and their personal pursuits. In Central Europe, argues Konrad, it is impossible to overthrow local elites, yet it is feasible to absorb them, to invest them with the plurality

THE NEW REPUBLIC'S BEST BOOKS

Following is a list of books TNR *has recently reviewed and recommends.*

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›ourgeois" needs and aspirations of roadly based middle class. The op- ɔn should formulate a program of n that could be carried out from ›p down.

ıat is striking in the "Hungarian defined by Konrad is not its origi- y. It is, rather, its familiarity. The seems to arise in various times and es, usually after some major and ;ic upheaval, and to belong to the ıdard repertoire of postwar Central ·opean history. The most vivid ex- ple is Poland, which tried to realize ıctly the same program after 1956, e year of the Hungarian uprising. hen the supposedly pragmatic and ɔnservative Hungarians took to arms, ıe "romantic" Poles, mindful of the ragic consequences of their own brief ıpheaval that took place a couple of months earlier in Poznan, remained calm and prudent. They looked across the border with admiration, but also with the anxiety that the shocks of rebellion in the south might upset the precarious conjunction of interests they thought they were building between the new power elite and the society. They also spoke about the need to guard their European heritage, they drafted reforms that could be carried out by the party, and they dreamed about enlightened paternalistic authoritarianism as the best alternative to the present situation. The two very dissimilar nations seem to rotate on opposite edges of the same historical wheel. The Hungarians discovered the quiet, reformist strategy of compromise exactly at the time that the Poles started to abandon it. The coincidence of political, economic, and personal factors was certainly less favorable for the Poles.

YET THE DEEPER and more universal reason for their disillusionment was probably the realization that the true conjunction of interests between the power elite and the society is an illusion, and that hard-won liberties do not bring them any closer to their real goal. Political freedom, contrary to what Arthur Koestler once claimed, does not seem to be a matter of degree. The real difference between democracy and nondemocracy is not the extent of freedom, but the fact of who controls it. A thoroughly democratic society may under certain circumstances restrict its liberties considerably. And an authoritarian regime can extend them, retaining at the same time the full potential control over all the aspects of life. It is even possible to imagine two societies in which the degree of liberty would be identical, though one of them would be totally democratic and the other totally authoritarian—and the difference would be immediately perceived by all.

This is exactly the core of the Central European problem, the reason for the repeated crises troubling this part of the world. Of course one should not reject beforehand all the partial and temporary gains which some of the Central European nations today enjoy. Still, it would be wrong to expect that some kind of "Hungarization" would finally and permanently abolish the tensions created by Yalta. The future of these nations will be defined by three factors, so far unchangeable: the inherent insecurity of the Soviet system, the will of the Soviet elite to maintain and protect it by all possible means, and their power to do so. Until one of these changes substantially, there is little hope for a general reconciliation and unification of Europe. When they do change, moreover, there will probably be no need for such a deal, since we shall witness an irreversible dissolution of the Soviet system and the empire it has created.

The perfect security of the Soviet system cannot be guaranteed in a treaty, as Konrad and many others would like to believe, not only because it would be immoral to extend such guarantees, but because they are simply beyond the scope of any political decision. The Soviets seem to understand this perfectly well. The tensions and the dangers of modern times originate not from the competition between two superpowers, or even two ideologies, but between history and totalitarianism, which is its negation. This struggle has seen in the past, and will see in the future, many stalemates, truces, compromises, and partial shifts of balance; but it can be concluded only in an unquestionable victory of one of them.

This is certainly not an encouraging situation, and therefore it will generate escapist programs, calls for radical reconciliation or radical confrontation. In the final analysis, however, we can rely only on our intelligence to understand the rules of the game, and on old-fashioned politics to play it to the end.

JAROSLAW ANDERS

Jaroslaw Anders is an associate fellow at the New York Institute for the Humanities. He currently lives in Washington.

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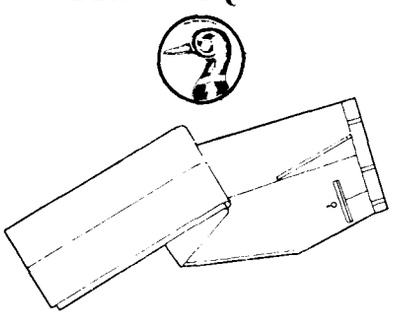

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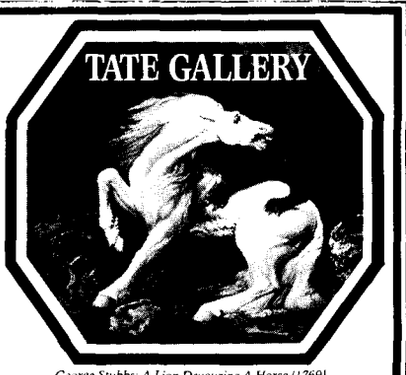

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TRB, *from page 6*

an integrated matter." But I bet it means something specific, and nothing nice.

The domestic content example illustrates another platform technique, which might be called "flag-wrapping": take an unassailable high-minded principle, such as "international trade," and use it to package something of less universal appeal. Calling the notion that cars sold in the United States should be made in the United States "a sound principle of international trade" is preposterous, since the whole idea of international trade is to make something in one country and sell it in another. Consider also the phrase, "Medicare, Social Security, federal pensions, farm price supports and dozens of other people-oriented programs . . . ," as if paying farmers not to grow food were on a par with guaranteeing health care to old people.

If you're serving up something soft and bland, try garnishing the dish with a spicy sense of urgency: "it is time that a national Economic Cooperation Council was created." This Council is supposed to address "several particularly important functions that today are poorly performed or poorly coordinated by the government," including "coordination and policy coherence," so you can see why time is of the essence.

On the other hand, if you know that what's cooking is truly indigestible, try slathering it with mayonnaise. Don't say you're against deregulation; say, "the country should take a careful look at the direction deregulation is taking." If you're not sure whether you want to serve a particular dish at all—or even what, exactly, it is ("an independent criminal justice corporation"?)—just say it should be "considered."

The organization of a platform is a subtle business. A pledge of more research money for AIDS goes in the paragraph that starts, "We reaffirm the dignity of all people. . . ." A pledge of more research money for sickle-cell anemia, by contrast, belongs in the department, "Economic Justice: Keeping Our Commitments." Measles vaccines go under "Investing in Children." I seem to have missed all the references to dreadful diseases that strike without regard to race, age, or sexual preference. But I'm damned if I'm going to read the thing again.

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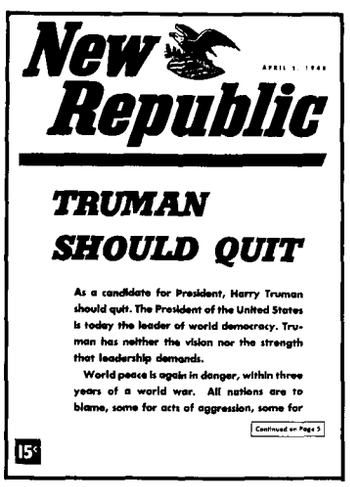
WASHINGTON DIARIST

Conventions

HAVE YOU EVER had ten thousand people shake their fists at you? That happened to me at the Republican convention in San Francisco in 1964. It was part of the rites of nominating Barry Goldwater for President. The crowd wasn't singling out me in particular, of course; it just didn't like the press, and I was in the press section at the Cow Palace. The noise was terrible; some of my colleagues trembled. Things like that happen at conventions.

THERE WAS A kind of frenzy among arch-conservatives in '64. They had control of the party at last, and some of them figured they were about to take over the country. Far-right National Chairman William Miller attacked Walter Lippmann and the so-called "liberal" press. Ex-President Eisenhower, in his speech, mentioned "sensation-seeking columnists and commentators" and stopped the show. He was so surprised at the roar of approval, he told me later, that he didn't know what he had said. That was when the gallery shook its fist at the press. Mark Hatfield's keynote address lumped together the John Birch Society, the Ku Klux Klan, and the Communists, and got ill-concealed groans of disapproval. The crowd all but hissed Nelson Rockefeller off the stage. And in his acceptance speech, Goldwater made the famous thrust against moderates: "Extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice . . . moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue!" L.B.J. clobbered him.


New Republic

TRUMAN SHOULD QUIT

As a candidate for President, Harry Truman should quit. The President of the United States is today the leader of world democracy. Truman has neither the vision nor the strength that leadership demands.

World peace is again in danger, within three years of a world war. All nations are to blame, some for acts of aggression, some for

Continued on Page 5

15¢

IN SOME YEARS you can tell the result of an election long in advance. In others you can't. The difficulty is to tell which is which. In general, don't put up your money till the last two weeks. Everybody knew, of course, that Alf (1936) and Adlai (1956) didn't have a prayer. But there was that Truman surprise in 1948. A lot of voters went into their polling booths and pulled the lever for Harry so his defeat wouldn't be so hard. They ended up electing him. Today's inclination to dismiss Walter Mondale recalls the dismissal of Truman. Fritz is running 10 or 15 Gallup points behind likable Ron. The President has finally moderated his language about Russia being the source of all evil, but does the public believe him? It could be a closer election than it looks.

TURN BACK a bit. On April 5, 1948, THE NEW REPUBLIC carried a dramatic banner on its cover: TRUMAN SHOULD QUIT. The editorial reflected what a lot of liberals were saying at the time. Both 1948 conventions were in Philadelphia. The Republicans picked Tom Dewey. Then it was the Democrats' turn. It was hot and steamy, and there was no air conditioning. They brought Truman up by train and stowed him away in the cellar. It would have been unthinkable to introduce him before the nomination. They kept him down there hour after hour. Around 2 A.M., after the radio audience had gone to bed, they brought him out and let him loose. The speech was a zinger. I wrote in my "TRB" column, "The Republicans are underestimating Truman as a campaigner. There's gratification in watching a rather mild, temperate, long-suffering man finally blow off steam against a reactionary Congress." Truman's twang cut through the humid air; the heat pressed down like a damp thumb; above, the tiered, shirt-sleeved galleries cheered for Harry. A new idea began to sink in: maybe this election was going to be more entertaining than we had supposed.

TRUMAN HAD a perfect foil: Tom Dewey was a hard man to love. As I wrote, I honestly tried to put aside bias, but when he came forward to receive his nomination ovation, "and we saw again in his bottle-brush mustache, his toothy smile, his dimples, and manikin face, we still found we couldn't love him. His fine, resonant voice soa and there wasn't any warmth in The speaker seemed to us cool, lating, and supremely self-confide went on to note, "Truman ma have given his party a victory in l delphia, but he gave it self-respect, it was fun to see the scrappy little come out of his corner fighting at in the morning." *Newsweek* polled reporters on Truman's whistle-s special train, and all without except said Dewey would win. Did Trun know? We honestly couldn't say. comes back as I write: the bounce of t cars, the rhythm of the train, the sm of the latrines, the staccato of the typ writers. I shifted at one point from th Truman to the Dewey train, and what bore that was. All the polls still sai Dewey. I run through yellowed clippings: October 16: "Dewey's speeches are so generalized that accompanying reporters find difficulty in picking out salient news items for their 'lead.' " Always that undercurrent of queer omens! October 21: "There's no doubt about it any longer, that chirping you hear is the sound of revived Democratic hopes." October 25: "Mr. Truman had a spectacular turnout in downtown Chicago. . . . Today [he] is storming over the big cities of the East." October 27: "An upturn in Truman stock generally is felt to be under way. . . . The upturn might change the result from a rout to a mere defeat."

YOU KNOW WHAT happened. Everyone has seen the picture of a victorious Truman the day after the election, in which he's holding up the early edition of the *Chicago Tribune*. The banner headline proclaims: DEWEY DEFEATS TRUMAN. I had always wondered what a newspaper does after such a monumental blunder. I assumed that the *Trib* would simply reverse field and announce, TRUMAN DEFEATS DEWEY. Not at all. The final edition said, EARLY DEWEY LEAD NARROW. That's the fighting spirit!

RICHARD L. STROUT

Richard L. Strout, a TNR contributing editor, wrote the "TRB" column from 1943 to 1983.

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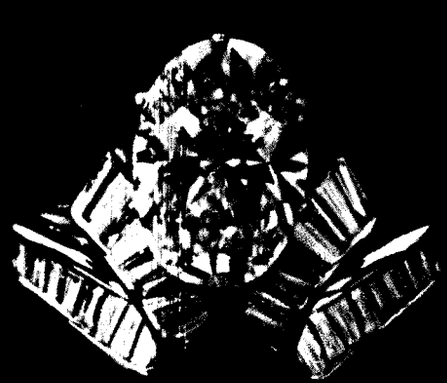

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